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OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES IN NEW ZEALAND'S FOREIGN POLICY IN ASIA 1949-75: A STUDY OF THE ISSUE OF THE RECOGNITION OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA AND OF SECURITY POLICIES IN SOUTH-EAST ASIA

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ABSTRACT

The evolution of New Zealand's policies concerning the diplomatic recognition of the People's Republic of China and concerning the security of South-east Asia is examined with a view to identifying the major objectives determining those policies, and the priorities among the objectives. Particular interest is in the role of allies in foreign policy determination, and whether objectives and priorities were constant for governments of different political colour.

The thesis examines China policy, then South-east Asian policies, chronologically from 1949 to 1975. The chapters are divided according to four variables: the political party concerned; whether it is in government or opposition; the particular policy, or policy area, and finally, the particular time period.

It was found that New Zealand's policies in both fields were greatly influenced by the attitudes of the country's closest friends. The influence of friends was powerful because of New Zealand's sense of military and economic dependence upon them and the consequent high priority given to maintaining strong relationships with them. On several occasions, New Zealand governments took courses of action to which they were not inclined, or refrained from courses of action to which they were inclined, because of allies. It was further found that the influences of the United States and Australia were the most pervasive throughout the period, although British attitudes were also important.

Of New Zealand's other objectives influential on policy, that of promoting a stable, anti-Communist South-east Asia was of importance, and so was the upholding of certain principles promoted by the United Nations.

It was found that New Zealand's Asian foreign policies were not significantly altered by changes of government. The two major political parties shared their important objectives and, most of the time, the priority among them.

PREFACE

Some confidential sources are used in this thesis. These are listed, for the examiners, in Appendix One.

The author is grateful for the help of many people and institutions in the construction of this thesis. Thanks are expressed to: the supervisors, Associate-Professors G.A. Wood and A.A. Cruickshank, of the Department of Political Studies, University of Otago; the head of the above department, Professor J.R. Flynn; Dr S.W. Greif; Dr D. Bing, of the University of Waikato; Sir Alister McIntosh; Sir Arnold Nordmeyer; Sir Keith Holyoake; Mr Bruce Brown; Mr Warren Freer; Baron Casey of Berwick; Sir Ronald Algie; Sir Percy Spender; Mr Jock Mathison; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and in particular, the head of its Research Division between 1973 and 1975, Mrs D. Moss; Professor Keith Sinclair of the University of Auckland; the trustees of the estate of Sir Walter Nash; the National Archives, and in particular, the Chief Archivist, Miss J. Hornabrook; the Hon. E.S.F. Holland; the Labour Party Research Unit and Headquarters staff. The author also thanks those who provided logistical support over a long haul: his parents; Mr and Mrs C.T. Pugh, of Wellington, and the typist, Mrs M. McLean.

CONTENTS

Page

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

A.I.I.A.	Australian Institute of International Affairs
A.J.H.R.	Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives.
A.N.U.	Australian National University
AMDA	Anglo-Malayan (Malaysian) Defence Agreement
ANZAM	Australia-New Zealand-Malaya (Commonwealth Defence Planning Agreement between Britain, Australia and New Zealand for South-east Asia 1948-1957).
ANZUK	Australia-New Zealand-United Kingdom (Five Power Collective Defence Agreement between Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia and Singapore, 1971).
ANZUS	Australia-New Zealand-United States (The Pacific Security Treaty, 1951).
A.R.D.E.A.	Annual Report of the Department of External Affairs
A.R.D.I.C.	Annual Report of the Department of Industries and Commerce.
A.R.M.F.A.	Annual Report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
A.S.	Auckland Star
C.N.I.A.	Current Notes on International Affairs
C.S.	Christchurch Star
D.O.S.B.	Department of State Bulletin
E.A.R.	External Affairs Review
E.P.	Evening Post (Wellington)
E.S.	Evening Star (Dunedin)
F.E.E.R.	Far Eastern Economic Review
Jnl.S.E.Asian Studs.	- Journal of South east Asian Studies
N.Z.H.	New Zealand Herald
N.Z.I.I.A.	New Zealand Institute of International Affairs
N.Z.L.P.	New Zealand Labour Party
N.Z.P.A.	New Zealand Press Association
N.Z.P.D.	New Zealand Parliamentary Debates
O.D.T.	Otago Daily Times
S.E.A.T.O.	South-east Asia Treaty Organisation
W.T.	Waikato Times

INTRODUCTION

This thesis has both narrow and broad objectives. In the first instance, the purpose is to make as full a study as possible of New Zealand's policies concerning the diplomatic recognition of the People's Republic of China between 1949 and 1972 and to make a study of New Zealand's security policies in South-east Asia over much the same period. The stimulus to undertaking these studies was the fact that these policies have not been examined in detail before. Only one study of any sort exists of New Zealand's policies concerning China: R.G. Shuker's 1971 M.A. thesis.[1] Apart from the fact that it does not cover the important 1971-1972 period, this thesis does not concentrate on recognition policy and is not structured to examine the policy of successive New Zealand governments in detail. The coverage of available information is not exhaustive. Security policies in South-east Asia have been studied more frequently, but again, by no means fully. There is, for instance, only one study of New Zealand's policy during Indonesia's Confrontation of Malaysia: Caird's 1970 M.A. thesis.[2] New Zealand's Vietnam policy has not yet been studied at all, and neither has the Third Labour government's Malaysia/Singapore policy. New Zealand's policy after the announcement of the British military withdrawal from Malaysia has been covered

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[1] Shuker, R.G. "New Zealand Policy and Attitudes towards Communist China", unpublished M.A. thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, 1971.

[2] Caird, R.J. "New Zealand's Foreign Policy and Malaya/Malaysia 1955-65", unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Canterbury, 1970

only by W.K. Jackson's article in the Journal of South-east Asian Studies.[3] At the time this thesis was begun, there had been no study of the period from 1949 to 1954, but this was rectified in some degree in 1977 by two essays.[4]

The second, and broader, purpose is to use these studies to identify, and to assess the relative importance of, some of the main objectives of New Zealand's Asian foreign policy during the period under consideration, and to examine the question of partisan difference in New Zealand's Asian policy.

The stimulus to a study of the relative importance of objectives was the questions raised in recent years about the role of external influence in New Zealand's foreign policy. Shortly after coming to power in 1972, Labour Prime Minister Kirk declared that henceforth New Zealand's foreign policy would be more independent and related to its own interests. New Zealand, he wrote,

> "has emerged from the phase in its national development when it allowed its policies to be determined by the views and interests of its most influential ally; at one time Britain, more recently, the United States".[5]

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[3] "Because it's there ... A consideration of the decision to commit New Zealand troops to Malaysia beyond 1971", *Journal of South east Asian Studies*, vol. II, No. 1, March, 1971.

[4] McKinnon, M.A. "From ANZUS to SEATO", and MacGibbon, I.C. "The Defence of New Zealand 1945-1957", both in *New Zealand in World Affairs*, vol. 1, New Zealand Institute of International Affairs, Wellington, 1977.

[5] Introduction, *Annual Report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1973*, p7, A.J.H.R. 1973 A-1.

Those scholars who have written about the period from 1951 to 1972, while hesitating to say that policies were "determined" by the interests of allies, have agreed that foreign views were very important in the formation of policy. Kennaway, for instance, says:

> "For nearly 20 years after 1951, New Zealand's external relations were dominated by the two relationships with Britain and the United States",[6]

and,

> "Concern for both relationships has been *an important factor* .... in New Zealand policies".[7]

W.K. Jackson says:

> "Generally speaking, ... it [New Zealand] acquiesced in the policies of its major partners even where it had important reservations about such policies, for New Zealand's approach to foreign affairs is fundamentally cautious and conservative".[8]

Jackson says that there are "indications" in the cases of the commitment to Malaysia in 1963, the sending of troops to Vietnam in 1965, and the commitment to Malaysia in 1969, that New Zealand was far from subservient to the wishes of its allies.

In the absence of detailed studies of New Zealand's Asian policies, Jacksons's "indications" are all that are available to justify his claims of reluctant acquiescence.

Some of those involved in the policy-making have appeared to deny that New Zealand owed much to the attitudes of its allies.

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[6] Kennaway, R.N. *New Zealand Foreign Policy 1951-1971*, p32

[7] Ibid., p38, emphasis added.

[8] Jackson, Keith, "Aspects of New Zealand Foreign Policy", in Wood, G.A. and O'Connor, P.S (eds.), *W.P. Morrell - A Tribute*, p232

G.R. Laking, Secretary of Foreign Affairs from 1966 to 1972, said in 1969 that the decision to keep New Zealand troops in Singapore after 1971 was

> "indicative of a reality that has been unnecessarily obscured - the determination of successive governments to frame their decisions in the light of a New Zealand assessment of New Zealand's interests".[9]

This thesis seeks more answers to the question: How far does it seem that New Zealand's Asian policies were influenced by the attitudes of other powers rather than by its government's perceptions? Since the degree of foreign influence on policy must depend upon the objectives of New Zealand's foreign policy and their relative importance, the question may be stated more basically as: what objectives were the most important in determining New Zealand's Asian policies?

The thesis comes to the conclusion that the policies studied were heavily influenced by the attitudes and policies of allies, although these allied policies were, for the most part, those that New Zealand policy-makers were basically inclined towards anyway. On several occasions, however, New Zealand's policy did not reflect its government's inclinations. The influence of allies was based on the high priority New Zealand governments accorded to objectives of strengthening relationships with allies.

As well as the question of the role of external influence, there is the question of which external influence was most important

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[9] Laking, G.R. "International Problems Confronting New Zealand in the 1970s", in Brown, Bruce (ed.) *Foreign Policy in the 1970s*, p19

at which times. F.L.W. Wood was the first to suggest, in 1953, that there was a tension in New Zealand's policies caused by the sometimes competing demands of its two dominant relationships. This tension was labelled "the ANZAC dilemma".[10] More recently, W.K. Jackson has stated that the period 1951-72 saw a steady tilting of the balance of influence in favour of the United States, with the turning points coming in the late 'fifties, after Suez, and the early 'sixties, after Britain's first announcement of an attempt at entry into the European Economic Community.[11] Jackson says that his hypothesis (as he concedes it to be) involves reducing the significance of the fall of Singapore in 1942 as a turning point in New Zealand policy; that is, he believes that New Zealand policies did not reflect a primary dependence on the United States until much later. Jackson does not offer much in the way of policy proof to justify his selection of turning points. He says:

> ".. even after the conclusion of the ANZUS Treaty, British-oriented policies continued to prevail, whether in Indo-China in 1954, Malaya in 1955, or in the important differences of opinion over Suez in 1956".[12]

The role of Australian influence is discussed only with reference to the Vietnam commitment. In this thesis, an attempt is made to draw some conclusions about the pattern of foreign influence in Asian foreign policies. Once again, the pattern of influence must stem from the priority among New Zealand objectives.

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[10] Wood, F.L.W. "The Anzac Dilemma", *International Affairs* (London) April, 1953, p184

[11] "Aspects of New Zealand Foreign Policy", in *W.P. Morrell: A Tribute*, pp223-225.

[12] Ibid., p224

The thesis concludes that American, and especially Australian, views were generally more influential than British attitudes in determining New Zealand policy towards Asia. Even in the 'fifties, New Zealand's policies more than once differed from those of Britain, while remaining closely aligned with those of Australia. New Zealand was always more hesitant to oppose American policy than to oppose British policy.

New Zealand's foreign policy objectives in Asia have been little commented on. W.K. Jackson claims that "traditionally our goals have tended to be largely undefined and often obscured behind those of other powers".[13] In 1975, the Head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Asian Division, Brian Lynch, suggested that some of New Zealand's goals in Asia in the 'fifties and 'sixties had been: to oppose aggression by one country against another; to uphold the right of a people to self-determination; to contain "the spread of Communism", so that close friends, closer to home, would not be exposed; and to help maintain non-Communist governments in power.[14] Lynch did not suggest an order of priority for these objectives.

This thesis also examines the bi-partisan development of New Zealand's Asian foreign policy. Once again, this aspect of foreign policy has not been much investigated. There has been an article on the claims of the Third Labour government to have broken the pattern

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[13] Jackson, Keith, "New Zealand's International Interests and the Search for Peace", in New Zealand Institute of International Affairs, *New Zealand Foreign Policy: Occasional Papers 1973-74* p49.

[14] Lynch, B. "Asian Security - A New Zealand Viewpoint", in *New Zealand Foreign Affairs Review*, November, 1975, pp13-24

of foreign policy of previous National governments, but nothing else.[15]

It has been assumed by some of those commenting briefly on the issue that New Zealand's policies have been bi-partisan. J.S. Hoadley asserted in 1975: "Only Question Time queries by backbenchers disturb general bi-partisanship in foreign policy".[16] The then-Leader of the Opposition, and ex-Prime Minister, J.R. Marshall, spoke in Parliament in 1974 of "the bi-partisan policies New Zealand has followed for many years".[17] Labour Party members, however, disagreed with him, and three years earlier, G.R. Laking had described the 1960s as the period when bi-partisanship in foreign affairs had ended. New Zealand's involvement in Vietnam, he wrote, "was the first significant foreign policy question over which Parliament divided in a partisan way".[18] During the period studied, there were four changes of government between the National and Labour Parties (in 1949, 1957, 1960 and 1972) with National governments dominating the period. The thesis looks at the differences in Labour and National approaches to Asia, and at how this difference affected policy. It asks the question: did the Labour Party in Opposition formulate different objectives from those of the National Party, and did Labour in office recognise a priority among objectives similar to that of the National Party?

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[15] Roberts, Nigel S. "Foreign Affairs: The Legend and Legacy of Norman Kirk", in *Islands* 10, vol. 3, No.4, Summer 1974.

[16] Hoadley, J. Stephen, "Domestic Influences on Foreign Policy: An Interpretation of New Zealand-Indonesian Relations", in Levine, S. (ed.) *New Zealand Politics: A Reader*, p443.

[17] *New Zealand Parliamentary Debates* (N.Z.P.D.), vol. 390, pp994, 996, 1051 and 1053, March 19 and 20, 1974.

[18] Laking, G.R. "Foreign Policy in the 1970s", in *New Zealand's Heritage*, vol. 21, p2895.

The conclusion reached is that policy was largely bi-partisan and that this was because the parties shared their major objectives. It was found, however, that Labour did formulate some different objectives in Opposition, and that there were some differences from National in the priority that Labour in office accorded its objectives. These facts accounted for the policy differences that there were.

The two sets of policies examined were thought to lend themselves well to the role of "case studies" for the wider objectives, for two reasons. First, each set of policies seemed likely to have been subject to a major external influence, and the external influence in each set was different. Kennaway notes that New Zealand's policy towards China was "more influenced by United States' than by British policy".[19] On the other hand, he states that the Federation of Malaya (later Malaysia) was an area "where British influence was an especially important factor in New Zealand policy during the 'fifties and early sixties".[20] Second, China recognition policy and security policies in both the Malaysian area and in Indo-China concerned each of the four governments of different political hue that ruled between 1949 and 1975. It was known that China recognition was one foreign affairs issue on which New Zealand's political parties had differences, and that there had been partisan differences about South-east Asian policies, too. The interaction of these differences with a constant external factor was thought likely to provide some evidence of the strength of the latter.

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[19] Kennaway, R.N. Op. Cit., p62

[20] Ibid., p52

Method

Any study of contemporary New Zealand foreign policy is constrained by two major factors. First, the public record lacks important components compared with a more "historical" period. The files of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs less than 25 years old are closed to scholars, and files for some years before that are not yet deposited with the National Archives and are not available. Records of Cabinet discussion and decision are not available, and neither are Caucus records. Thus the public record, for the most part, contains only the "public" face of policy - official explanations and justifications, and not a record of all the considerations that influenced policy.

The other major constraint is that the private record is also limited. Collections of private papers of policy-makers are few, and where extant, access is often restricted. Three Prime Ministers of the period studied - Holland, Nash and Holyoake - are known to have left papers, but all three collections present difficulties. The Nash papers are deposited in the National Archives, but will not be available to the public until 1980. The Holyoake papers are held by the General Assembly Library and will not be available until five years after Holyoake's death. Some Holland papers are held by the General Assembly Library and are available, but are unrevealing in the foreign affairs field. Nash and Holyoake were also the Ministers of External (or Foreign) Affairs in their governments; I am not aware of the existence of papers belonging to any of Holland's Ministers of External Affairs.

Given these factors, the public record, such as it is, must serve as the basis for study. The evolution of policies, and of

the stimuli and constraints, then, is traced by reference first to the considerations that government and party spokesmen *said* influenced their decisions. This approach can show the evolution of policy at one level - the rhetorical level - provided some caution is observed. Explanations and justifications will differ in differing contexts. Official explanations destined for overseas consumption will stress different factors from justifications given to a domestic audience for political purposes. The absence of certain elements from one sort of statement will not necessarily mean that they are not active considerations, or even the most important considerations. Factors stressed in another sort of statement may not be influential at all. A contrast between different types of statement made at similar times may prove illuminating. A careful eye to the political exigencies of the moment will be necessary.

Of course, even a satisfactory study at the rhetorical level will not give a clear picture, since some important considerations will never be voiced publicly at any level, and some that are voiced will not be true.

Hoadley notes: "Public debate of a particular policy often takes the form of the government espousing noble motives and its critics doubting them, with neither side acknowledging the many mundane domestic motives that bear on any policy decision".[21]

To try to overcome the difficulty of unacknowledged considerations in some measure, the thesis does three things. First, where possible, rhetoric is contrasted with what a government actually does:

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[21] Op. Cit., pp443-444

actions often speak louder than words. Second, the public and private records of other countries are utilised where these throw light on New Zealand policies. In particular, the memoirs or diaries of British, Australian and American policy-makers are used for their references to New Zealand attitudes, but some foreign public documents also serve this purpose. Third, where at all possible, information beyond the public record is obtained, to complement or contrast with the public record, as the case may be. The major sources in this regard have been the Research Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which was always willing to answer questions; surviving policy-makers, some of whom were prepared to give interviews or answer letters; and finally, private papers. Access was obtained to a very limited number of the papers of Walter Nash, and the Labour Party Research Unit permitted a perusal of its files for foreign policy position papers. In general, information about the 'fifties was easier to obtain than information about more recent times, and thus the balance of sources is more even for the earlier parts of the thesis.

The time-span of the thesis is from the end of 1949 to mid-1975. 1949 was the logical starting point for a study of China recognition policy, since the People's Republic came into being on October 1 of that year. Since South-east Asian security policies were linked to the rise of Communist China, the date is also a convenient one for the start of that study. The study of China recognition policy comes to a natural end with New Zealand's recognition of the People's Republic on December 22, 1972, but since some of the South-east Asian security policies of the Third Labour government continued to develop beyond that date, the last chapter goes on until 1975.

China and South-east Asian security policies are examined separately and in chronological order so that the evolution of each may be clear. The chapters are divided according to a combination of several of four variables; the political party concerned; whether it is in government or opposition; the particular policy or policy area, and finally, significant time periods.

Chapter One deals with China policy under Labour and National governments before the Korean War and the signing of ANZUS, while Chapter Two deals with policy made by the first National government (1949-57) in the slightly different context that existed after those events. Chapters Three and Four deal with Labour Party policy between 1950 and 1960, with Chapter Three chronicling the development of a distinctive China policy by Labour when in Opposition, and Chapter Four examining its fate while the party was in office, 1957 to 1960. Chapters Five and Six deal with the China policy of the Second National government (1960-1972) before and after the changes in American and Chinese attitudes in the late 'sixties. Chapter Seven deals with the Labour Party's attitude in the 'sixties and its eventual recognition of China when the government in 1972.

In the South-east Asia section, Chapter Eight examines the policies concerning South-east Asian security of the National government between 1949 and 1957. Chapter Nine covers the same period for the Opposition Labour Party, and then goes on to deal with the policies of Labour in government, 1957-60. The next three chapters examine three policies of the Second National government: - the response to Indonesia's Confrontation of Malaysia; the involvement in Vietnam, and the response to Britain's military withdrawal from Malaysia. Chapter Thirteen deals with Labour Party attitudes and

policies towards Malaysia 1967-75. It may be noted that there is no separate chapter dealing with Labour's Vietnam policy. This is mainly because the party's Vietnam policy was one articulated entirely in Opposition. By the time the Labour Party came to power in 1972, the issue of the presence of combat troops was a dead one, since the Americans and New Zealanders had substantially withdrawn. Labour's 1966 policy was not tested in government.

PRELUDE

At the end of 1949, New Zealand was in the middle of a period of transition in its foreign relations. The country's foreign policy-making context had been altered substantially by the events of the Second World War and its aftermath, and four years after the end of the war, New Zealand was both trying to retain what it could of the old order of things, and to adapt to the new. New Zealand's national interests had not changed, but the options open to fulfil them had.

After the war, as before it, New Zealand was a small physically isolated state, with a dependent, agricultural economy, and virtually no resources for effective defence. To survive, it had always needed guaranteed foreign markets for its agricultural produce, and protection from powerful nations. Before the war, as indeed from the time of its foundation as a nation, New Zealand had relied upon Britain to fulfil both its needs. Created as a colony of Britain while Britain was the pre-eminent global power, New Zealand developed under the protection of the Royal Navy as a supplier of cheap food to the British market. In its foreign policy decision-making, such as it was, for New Zealand had few resources to conduct a foreign policy, New Zealand's relationship with Britain was the major factor. To a large extent, New Zealand saw British interests and goals as, ultimately, its own, and with some exceptions, the 1939 Prime Ministerial declaration that where Britain went, New Zealand went also, held true. The exceptions occurred where British

policy was judged not to be serving New Zealand's economic or security interests.[1]

The basis for New Zealand's loyal outlook began to change in 1940 and 1941, when British power to protect New Zealand was suddenly revealed to be limited. Japan attacked British possessions in Asia and the Pacific when Britain was heavily engaged against Germany and Italy in Europe. It was seen that the only effective friendly power in New Zealand's region was the United States.

New Zealand was forced to appeal to the United States for protection, and American troops landed in the country in 1942. In 1944, Labour Prime Minister Peter Fraser declared: "New Zealand realises that the security and future development of the Pacific can only be satisfactorily achieved in co-operation with the United States",[2] and he had gone on to express the hope that wartime mutual assistance would develop into a policy of permanent mutual collaboration after the war. As a direct result of the experience of the war, New Zealand became interested in bringing the United States and Britain together formally in a pact to ensure Antipodean protection. The Americans, however, were preoccupied with European protection in the late 'forties, and were not willing to extend guarantees to New Zealand and Australia.

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[1] The standard work on New Zealand's pre-war policies is Wood, F.L.W. "*The New Zealand People at War - Political and External Affairs*"; see also Ross, A. "Reluctant Dominion or Dutiful Daughter? New Zealand and the Commonwealth in the Inter-War Years", *Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies*, vol. X. No. 1, March, 1972.

[2] Statement by the Rt. Hon. Peter Fraser in Washington, 17 April. 1944, in N.Z. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *New Zealand Foreign Policy Statements and Documents 1943-1957* p65

In 1949, the New Zealand government was still interested in a Pacific pact, but not hopeful of achieving it.

Immediately after the war a superior means of ensuring New Zealand's physical security was thought by New Zealand's Labour government to lie in a system of Universal Collective Security. New Zealand had been a vigorous supporter of the old League of Nations system in the mid-'thirties, and was keen that the new United Nations system be more effective than the League's had been. By the end of the 'forties, however, it was evident to the Fraser government that the antagonism and rivalry between the two largest powers, and the subsequent division of the world into two rival camps, had rendered the system unworkable. Although it intended to continue to promote the system and United Nations principles to the best of its ability, New Zealand knew that it must seek protection elsewhere.

The major threat to world peace was seen to have changed as a result of the war, and in New Zealand's eyes this role was, by 1949, filled by the Soviet Union, which was believed to be intent upon imposing Communism on as many countries as it could. Fraser told Parliament in 1948 that an attempt by one nation to force its political and social system on to others was tyranny and must be opposed.[3]

Although the New Zealand government recognised that the strategic balance of power in the world had been fundamentally altered by the war, and that British power was no longer on a par with that of the

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[3] N.Z. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *New Zealand Foreign Policy Statements and Documents* p180

Soviet Union or the United States, it continued to believe that New Zealand's future was primarily linked to that of Britain and the Commonwealth. In 1949 New Zealand was still economically and culturally much more closely connected to Britain than to any other state, and militarily Britain was still a global power with strong forces in the Pacific. New Zealand was still prepared in its foreign policy to assist Britain in its global role. Fraser told the 1949 Labour Party Conference that New Zealand's destiny was "wholly and completely" bound up with the British Commonwealth,[4] and later in the year was prepared to commit New Zealand to send troops to assist Britain in the Middle East if global war should break out.

Despite a willingness by New Zealand to resume the patterns of the past in foreign policy, the claims of a new situation were insistent. The war had made the Pacific region - and Asia in particular - of real importance in New Zealand's foreign policy, and British priorities were elsewhere. In the 'twenties and 'thirties New Zealand had been somewhat concerned about a threat from Japan, but after that threat had materialised, Japan's future became a subject of great importance to New Zealand.

In the absence of any guarantee of its security from the United States, New Zealand, along with Australia, was determined to prevent Japan becoming a threat again. New Zealand had spoken out since the end of the war for a "hard" peace treaty that would limit Japan's armaments and industrial development. New Zealand's views, however,

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[4] Brown, B. *New Zealand Foreign Policy in Retrospect*, p10

were opposed by the United States, which was eager to "rehabilitate" Japan and build it up as a democratic ally against the Soviet Union. Since the United States was the power in control of the administration of Japan, New Zealand knew that it depended on American goodwill for the protection of its interests in the matter. In 1949, a peace treaty was still not in sight.

Developments in other parts of Asia were impinging on New Zealand's consciousness, and by 1949 were coming to cause as much concern as the Japanese issue. The single most important development was the upsurge of Asian nationalism in the wake of the war, and the beginnings of decolonisation. India, Pakistan, Ceylon, Burma and the Philippines had been granted independence between 1946 and 1948. Anti-colonialist wars had broken out in French Indo-China, the Dutch East Indies, and British Malaya. New Zealand's reaction to this development was mixed. The Labour government which had been in power since 1935 was sympathetic to the aspirations of the Asians. Support for the self-determination of peoples was part of the Labour Party's credo as well as being a principle of the United Nations Charter. On the other hand, the nationalist forces were unknown quantities compared with the colonial governments, and some were dominated by Communists. In the context of the Cold War, these latter were seen as advance-guards of hostile Soviet power. In 1948, Prime Minister Fraser spoke of the Communist-led insurgency in Malaya as "that dark, turgid, dangerous flood".[5] The Civil War in China between the Communists and the independent Nationalist government was being watched

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[5] *New Zealand Foreign Policy: Statements and Documents*, p179

with some concern: - New Zealand was sympathetic to the non-Communist government which had been an ally against the Japanese during the war. In Indonesia, the non-Communist nationalist government was publicly supported.

The war wrought another change in New Zealand's policy-making context by initiating the development of a close relationship with Australia. Despite Australia's nearness and similar heritage, there had been little consultation between New Zealand and its neighbour before the war. The common threat of Japan inaugurated a close working relationship, symbolised in the Canberra Pact of 1944. In this agreement, the two governments pledged to collaborate in external policy in all matters affecting the peace of the Pacific, and in defence.[6] After the war, the governments collaborated in the setting up of the United Nations and in regard to the question of Japan. By 1949, Australian opinion was an important factor in New Zealand's policy-making.

The 'forties had seen New Zealand start to establish a diplomatic network - an essential for an independent foreign policy - but by 1949, there were only five posts all told - in Britain, Australia, Canada, the United States and the Soviet Union. New Zealand had no diplomatic eyes and ears at all in Asia.

1949 then, found New Zealand balancing old attachments and concerns against new ones. The close traditional friendship with Britain was already tempered in some degree by the influence of Australia and the need for co-operation with the United States.

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[6] For the Canberra Agreement and the background to it, see Kay, R.L. (ed.) *The Australian-New Zealand Agreement 1944*, Wellington, 1972.

Belief in the United Nations Collective Security System and United Nations principles was tempered with knowledge that the Cold War had severely limited their application; a traditional concern with European affairs was balanced by a growing awareness of Asia's importance to New Zealand, and a decades-old fear of Japan was being tempered with a new fear of Communist influence in Asia. By 1965, the balance would have tilted strongly against the old attachments and concerns, and by 1975, even the new would be somewhat outdated, being replaced in part by other concerns.

CHAPTER 1

NEW ZEALAND AND THE QUESTION OF THE RECOGNITION OF COMMUNIST CHINA 1949-50

Introduction

When the Chinese Communist Party announced its assumption of power in that country by the proclamation of the existence of the People's Republic of China, New Zealand was faced with the decision of whether or not to grant the new government diplomatic recognition. Although the British government was in favour of an early recognition by all the Commonwealth countries, New Zealand's Labour Party government was not prepared to recognise. It was believed that recognition of the Communist government would help to strengthen it, and the Labour government did not believe that such a strengthening was in New Zealand's interests, primarily because it feared Chinese intentions in South-east Asia. New Zealand also took into account the fact that recognition would upset the United States, whose goodwill New Zealand needed in connection with the Japanese Peace Treaty. Morally, the Labour government was reluctant to throw over its war-time ally, the Nationalist government of China, or put its seal of approval on a regime that had come to power by violent means. At the end of November, 1949, the Labour government was defeated, and the new National Party government was faced with the same question. Although the government's foreign policy advisers thought early recognition desirable, the National government, too, was not prepared to go along with Britain. The reasons were the same as those put forward by the Labour government, with the addition that

National believed that recognition would be embarrassing politically because of the strong anti-Communist election campaign the party had mounted.

After the close of the Second World War, Civil War resumed in China between the Nationalist government and the forces of the Chinese Communist Party. This war had begun in the early nineteen-thirties and had been officially suspended after the Japanese attack on China in 1937. During the war with the Japanese, the Communists had strengthened their position, while the hold of the Nationalist government on the population had weakened. In the resumed civil war, the area of Communist control began to spread.

The advance of Chinese Communist power was watched with some concern by the Labour government in New Zealand. Undoubtedly this was because a Communist country - the Soviet Union - was considered the greatest threat to world peace in the post war years. After the fall of North China to the Communists in late 1948, Prime Minister Fraser said:

".. we do not like to see the Communists becoming strongly established in China, but actually this is a matter for the Chinese people".[1]

He predicted that the advance of the Communists would have a "disturbing effect" on other Pacific nations, but not a decisive effect at that stage.

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[1] *Waikato Times* January 10, 1949, p5

Two days after having made that comment, Fraser, who was returning to New Zealand from Britain at the time, declared that Communist successes in China did not present "an immediate threat to New Zealand and Australia, but there is no telling what may happen in the future".[2] Once back in Auckland, the Prime Minister repeated his belief that developments in China would have no direct immediate effect on New Zealand, but said that they posed a danger to other areas of Asia.

"Luckily there are 6000 good Pacific miles between us and China, but the danger to South-west Asia is very serious and immediate. We cannot possibly take up a complacent attitude and must be prepared for all emergencies".[3]

During 1949, the Communist forces gradually occupied most of China.

At the opening of the 1949 session of Parliament at the end of June, the Governor-General, in his Speech from the Throne, said:

> "During the past year, the political situation in East Asia has engaged the particular attention of my Ministers. They are devoting careful consideration to the developments which have recently occurred and to the implications which they may have for the security of New Zealand and of the British Commonwealth as a whole".[4]

In Parliament in September, however, Labour backbencher G.H.O. Wilson declared that the threat from Japan was "infinitely greater" and "nearer to us than any threat which may have come from

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[2] *Waikato Times (W.T)* Jan. 12, 1949, p5

[3] *W.T.* January 25, 1949, p4

[4] *New Zealand Parliamentary Debates (NZPD)* vol. 285, p3, 28 June, 1949

Communist China".[5] A threat from China was only likely to develop if China moved into the Russian orbit, Wilson thought, and this, in turn, "would depend largely upon the policy of the Western powers, and upon our policy as a minor portion of those powers". A policy that didn't prejudge China could well see it leaning towards the West. Otherwise, Wilson said, he did not see why Communist China "should more than superficially resemble the shape of Russia". However, even if China were pushed into the Soviet orbit, "it would still be nonsense to think of a Communist China - even one closely allied with Russia - as the worst threat to us in the Pacific".

On October 1, 1949, the Communist Party of China announced its assumption of power in that country by formally proclaiming in Peking the existence of the People's Republic of China. At the same time, the new government asked for diplomatic recognition from the world.

New Zealand's initial reaction was to temporise until the policies of its closest friends became clear. The New Zealand delegation at the United Nations was told that the Prime Minister was unwilling to make any commitments on the subject of recognition, and that New Zealand's attitude must depend in part on the attitudes of the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia and "other" countries.[6]

Britain had announced, a few days after the proclamation of the People's Republic, that it would proceed to discuss "with the Commonwealth and other interested powers", the Communist request for recognition.[7]

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[5] *NZPD* vol. 287, p1888, September 6, 1949

[6] Information supplied by the Research Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

[7] *Evening Star*, October 4, 1949, p5

The foremost interested power was the United States. On October 12, Secretary of State Acheson stated that there were three tests which the administration believed should be passed by any government before it was granted recognition: it should control the country it claimed to control; it should recognise its international obligations; and it should rule with the acquiescence of the people who were ruled.[8] The Secretary did not say whether China passed these tests. On the same day, however, the Department of State, in an instruction to its diplomatic posts abroad, stated that the United States government's position was one of non-recognition, if any foreign government raised the question.[9]

Later in the month, the new Chinese government upset public opinion in the United States by jailing the American Consul-General in Mukden, Angus Ward, and four of his associates, on charges of assaulting a Chinese employee. President Truman called the jailing an outrage, and it made any immediate move towards acceptance of the Peking government out of the question.[10]

In Australia, the Labor government, too, seemed to be disinclined to grant recognition. On October 25, the Minister of External Affairs, H.V. Evatt, said that China would have to pass the same three tests set out by Acheson, and then went on to declare that

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[8] *Department of State Bulletin* October 15, 1951, p605 "U.S. Policy towards China 1949-50: Statement by Philip C. Jessup, Ambassador at Large, to Special Sub-Committee of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, October 4, 1951".

[9] Ibid.

[10] Dulles, F.R. *American Policy Toward Communist China*, pp.51-52

recognition could not be granted in the absence of "firm and specific assurances that the territorial integrity of neighbouring countries, notably Hong Kong, will be respected".[11]

The British government, however, pushed on with its consultations. At the end of October, the British Foreign Secretary asked the Commonwealth High Commissioners in London to meet him on November 10 to discuss the question.[12] The British government was inclined towards an early recognition to protect British trading interests in China and to avoid leaving the Chinese government exposed solely to Russian influences.

Prime Minister Fraser was involved in the campaign for the 1949 general election in New Zealand when the High Commissioner's request for the government's opinion was conveyed to him. New Zealand's representative in London was told that Fraser was "very much adverse" to according recognition at that time. Any such recognition, Fraser believed, would be hailed as another important victory for the Communists, with consequent strengthening of their position and prestige in China, and in all other troubled areas in the Far East. The Prime Minister conceded that the Nationalist government of China was a spent force, but considered that it would create a bad impression - especially among non-Communist Chinese - if the British Commonwealth were to take the initiative in throwing them over in favour of the Communists. Fraser did not think that British arguments in favour of recognition were really strong enough to justify the granting of it.[13]

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[11] Albinski, H.S. *Australian Policies and Attitudes towards China* p31

[12] Information supplied by the Research Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

[13] Ibid.

There was a further factor in the Prime Minister's thinking which was also conveyed to the High Commissioner: the proximity of the New Zealand general election. This was scheduled for November 30, 1949. The government was firmly opposed to any New Zealand recognition before the election.[14] A government which recognised the People's Republic of China would run the risk of being damaged electorally by charges of being sympathetic to Communism, and Fraser was not going to give the Opposition a stick to beat him with.[15]

The New Zealand Prime Minister had been invited to Canberra by H.V. Evatt to discuss the attitude of Commonwealth countries to the new regime in China with visiting British diplomats who had just concluded a conference in Singapore on Britain's China policy. The meeting was scheduled for November 10 and 11. The chief British delegate would be Esler Dening, head of the Foreign Office's Far Eastern section. Fraser, busy with the election campaign, sent the External Affairs Department's permanent head, A.D. McIntosh, instead.

McIntosh discussed Fraser's views on China with Evatt prior to the meeting, mentioning the constraint of the elections, and these views may have influenced the Australian government's decision not to recognise until after the Australian elections on December 10. Australian Prime Minister Chifley's biographer, L.F. Crisp, certainly implies that New Zealand's decision influenced the uncertain Chifley to wait.[16]

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[14] Ibid.

[15] Interview, Sir Alister McIntosh, 21.2.74

[16] Crisp, L.F. *Ben Chifley* p294

At the conference, McIntosh, on behalf of the New Zealand government, made out an extreme case against recognition. The views he expressed were conceived by Fraser, but had been endorsed by Nash.[17]

McIntosh told the conference that New Zealand regarded the advent of a Communist China "with the utmost concern", fearing it would lead to a Communist Asia with the subsequent loss of Western influence over Asiatic peoples. Recognition would strengthen Communists everywhere, and help consolidate the Communist regime in China, which was not in New Zealand's interest.

Further, recognition by the Commonwealth would "antagonise and irritate" the United States, and tend to increase American determination to strengthen Japan at the expense of the security of New Zealand.

Apart from these practical grounds, Fraser believed that it would be morally wrong to recognise the seizure of power by the Communist Party in China, since the people would hold power against the wishes of a majority of the people.

Recognition would involve throwing over "unnecessarily and ungratefully", a former ally, which, despite its sorry record, was a victim of aggression. Fraser's comment that Nationalist China had been the victim of aggression showed that he believed the Communist victory in China to be the result of Russian machinations.

Finally, the Prime Minister believed that people who thought that China would turn Titoist were deluding themselves, and that at best, any such prospect was a wild gamble.[18]

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[17] Information supplied by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

[18] Information provided by the Research Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The counter-arguments of the other officials were such, however, that McIntosh left the meeting agreed that he would recommend to the New Zealand government that New Zealand should recognise.[19]

In the meantime, however, it was suggested to the British representatives that any Commonwealth decision on recognition be held over until the Commonwealth Foreign Ministers Conference at Colombo, Ceylon, in January.

The British government later indicated that it was prepared to wait at least until after the Australasian elections before raising the subject again. On November 13, British Foreign Secretary Bevin told United States Secretary of State Acheson that the British would probably not recognise the Communist regime before mid-December, 1949.[20] In the House of Commons three days later, Bevin said: "I am more concerned in acting together with the Commonwealth and with other friendly governments than with taking a hurried decision on this matter. A combined decision ... is much the best".[21]

On November 30, 1949, the general election was held in New Zealand and Fraser's Labour government was defeated by the National Party. Ten days later, at the Australian general election, Chifley's Labor government was defeated by its opponents, the Liberal-Country Party Coalition led by Robert Menzies.

The victorious National Party of Sidney Holland had not taken a position on the recognition of China prior to the election. Foreign Affairs were, as usual, not election issues. The new Prime Minister's

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[19] McIntosh Interview 21.2.74

[20] Acheson, D. *Present at the Creation* p332

[21] *House of Commons Debates* vol. 469, Column 2013, 16 November, 1949

first statement on foreign policy was made on December 8, and it stressed the continuity of existing policy and increased attention to solidarity with Britain: "It is our intention to carry on existing policies concerning international affairs, but with emphasis on strengthening imperial relationships".[22]

On the face of it, this might seem to suggest that Britain's proposed policy towards China would be endorsed. However, the new government had come to power on a staunchly anti-Communist platform. A memo from a senior member of the Eastern section of the Department of External Affairs noted in mid-December that while the balance of practical advantages seemed in favour of early recognition, there were several likely constraints. These were that recognition would be contrary to the political thought of the National Party and its supporters, that the new Australian government might not be in favour, and finally that recognition would meet with "the implacable opposition of Fraser, now Leader of the Opposition".[23] The same member also observed that the question was not of much practical significance for New Zealand, and that there was no call for New Zealand to take any initiative. Indeed, he said, New Zealand might delay doing anything for quite a while.

The British government, however, had decided that it could delay recognition no longer. New Zealand, along with other allies, was informed in mid-December that Britain would recognise in early January, and the new government was asked whether it felt disposed to take parallel action.

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[22] *O.D.T.* December 8, 1949

[23] Information provided by the Research Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

It was an awkward time to make a decision. The National government had been in office for a little over a week, and the Minister of External Affairs, F.W. Doidge, was still in the process of preparing a series of foreign policy recommentations to Cabinet, including one on the recognition of China.[24]

If the Prime Minister and Minister of External Affairs had been mainly influenced by their advisers in the Department of External Affairs, it would seem probable that New Zealand would have followed Britain. A comprehensive survey of the arguments for and against had been drawn up by the Eastern section, and it had come to the conclusion that the weight of argument supported early recognition. The survey was ruthlessly realist. There was no prospect of the re-establishment of the Nationalist government in China, it said. The Chinese people were unlikely to suffer as much corruption and oppression under the new regime as under the old, and therefore the growth of effective counter-revolutionary forces could not be expected. China was undoubtedly in for a long period of Communist domination. [A month previously, with the Nationalists still holding parts of South China, Fraser had been interested in not undermining the morale of the non-Communist Chinese]. The survey said that Fraser's points about recognition being an act of encouragement to other Communists, and an irritation to the United States, were important, but even so, did not justify a determination never to extend recognition. The memo argued strongly that continued contact with China was the West's best policy. By refusing to recognise China, it said, the West was giving an open field to the Russians.. Western help

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[24] Information supplied by the Research Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

for China would prevent China's being economically integrated into Russia, and it would also strengthen the position of the non-Communist element in the population. Unlike Fraser, the author of the survey believed that Communism in China, as in Yugoslavia, had been largely a local growth.

He said that while it could not be lightly assumed that Mao was a potential Tito, it had to be recognised that the history of the Communist Party of China and the nature of the Chinese people made the emergence of nationalist (and ultimately even anti-Soviet) policies not so wildly improbable. The many natural points of conflict between China and Russia should not be overlooked.

The summary noted that Western diplomats in Asia believed that the Overseas Chinese already regarded the Communist government as the legitimate government of China, and that therefore Commonwealth recognition would give the Communists no greater filip. Non-recognition would strengthen the pro-Russian, anti-Western extremists in the Chinese government.

The summary then listed some factors in favour of a later, rather than an early, recognition. As long as the Nationalist government remained in existence, it would be a betrayal of democracy and a wartime ally to recognise the Communists. [The Nationalist government had just fled to the island of Taiwan]: the United States set great store by a United Front with regard to China among the democratic countries; and finally, recognition would strengthen the intransigence of the Vietminh in French Indo-China.[25]

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[25] Information provided by the Research Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The conclusion about early recognition was endorsed by the Assistant Secretary of External Affairs, who saw the memorandum. This officer noted that the only important counter-argument was that which concerned the attitude of the United States. If the United States had offered to underwrite New Zealand's security, then that counter-argument might have been decisive, he wrote, but it was not so.[26] The officer accepted that American disapproval should have been a decisive constraint if New Zealand were allied with the United States. However, since the United States was not an ally, there was no problem. The American attitude was important, but not overriding. There was no thought here of an "insurance" policy against future threats, a necessity to curry favour.

A further memo on the China question was prepared on, or near, December 18. It said that Communist China had now fulfilled the normal international requirements for recognition, and that dislike of its policies could not be a sufficient reason for withholding that recognition. While the New Zealand government would be naturally reluctant to drop the Chiang Kai-shek government which fought the Japanese as New Zealand's ally, the balance of argument seemed to favour the re-establishment of relations between the current government of China and the democratic countries, which would to some extent offset Soviet influence. Although New Zealand had no direct interest in the issue and could delay doing anything about it, it would strengthen the United Kingdom's position if other British Commonwealth countries also extended early recognition.[27]

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[26] Ibid.

[27] Information supplied by the Research Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The government was also given an opinion by its military advisers on the strategic implications of the recognition of Communist China. The Army felt that on the whole the benefits from recognition outweighed the disadvantage, but cautioned against moving out of step with the United States. The military assessment was that a Communist Chinese government did not involve any direct threat to the security of New Zealand while the Commonwealth retained control of sea communications. It was militarily desirable that China did not become a satellite of the Soviet Union, and therefore Titoist tendencies should be encouraged. A diplomatic presence by the Commonwealth in China would be the means for seeking out and encouraging deviationists. It was acknowledged that recognition would encourage the Communist factions in other Far Eastern countries, and even the growth of Communism among the New Zealand Chinese, but these factors did not outweigh the advantages of a diplomatic presence. As for the timing of the recognition, delay would mean that the Chinese would treat an eventual recognition as an unwilling gesture, performed with bad grace.

However, recognition by the British Commonwealth countries in opposition to the United States might well provide an opportunity, in the event of a Far Eastern crisis in which American support for Commonwealth countries was most desirable, for the United States to insist that British Commonwealth countries accept the consequences of having acted independently in the matter of recognition.[28]

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[28] Ibid.

Other influences apart from the External Affairs Department and the Armed Services were at work upon Doidge and Holland, however. One of Doidge's first moves after hearing of the necessity for decision on the China question was to consult Peter Fraser, the Leader of the Opposition. Fraser's advice was consistent with his earlier opinion as Prime Minister, and he and Doidge agreed in their discussion that New Zealand was being pushed too far too fast by the United Kingdom. Fraser endorsed a Doidge suggestion that a protest be made against the haste, and that a suggestion be made that the matter be held up for discussion at the Ceylon conference.[29]

The Minister of External Affairs, then, was encouraged by the Leader of the Opposition to stall on the matter. Further encouragement came from New Zealand's nearest ally. The Australian government told Holland that it, too, was keen for a delayed recognition.

On December 21, the government told the British government that it could not help feeling regret that a matter of such great importance to the members of the British Commonwealth in the Asian and Pacific areas should be decided in advance of the Ceylon conference. The conference would have provided the most appropriate opportunity for the consultation necessary for agreement on parallel action. The government said that it preferred to reserve its position until after the conference, which would enable it to ascertain the views of other Commonwealth governments.[30] At that stage, New Zealand's diplomatic network covered only Britain, Australia and Canada in the Commonwealth: there was no machinery for consultation with India, Pakistan, Ceylon or South Africa.

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[29] Information supplied by the Research Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

[30] Ibid.

In the later part of December, further influences against recognition were conveyed to the government. The department was apprised by its representative in the United States that British recognition was likely to arouse strong resentment among the press and public in the United States as well as in the Administration.

The feeling in the United States was believed to be that Britain, in this matter which had implications far beyond the actual fact of recognition, should co-ordinate its activities with the United States. If Britain did rush into recognition unilaterally, it was hoped that there would be no bloc recognition by the Commonwealth which would unnecessarily isolate the United States.[31]

The government was also aware that the Chinese Nationalists were anxious about New Zealand's intentions with regard to the Communist government. Secretary McIntosh told the Nationalist Consul-General on December 22 that New Zealand at that time had no intention of recognising Communist China, but that this could change in the New Year, especially if other countries recognised. He said that he thought it was only a question of time.[32]

At the end of the month, the Minister of External Affairs stated publicly that the recognition of China was an issue which the government expected would be discussed at Colombo, and that New Zealand's attitude was likely to differ from other Commonwealth countries.

"It might be", he said, "that New Zealand's attitude, both as to recognition, and timing of recognition, would differ from that of some of the other nations of the British Commonwealth".[33]

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[31] Information supplied by the Research Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

[32] Ibid.

[33] *Evening Star* December 29, 1949, p8

The government had already told Britain that it would not conform to Britain's timing for recognition. Now Doidge introduced doubt about whether New Zealand would recognise at all. The British government appears to have assumed that some Commonwealth countries would not recognise China, even if the issue was thoroughly discussed at Colombo. When taken to task in the House of Commons in March, 1950, for not waiting until after the Colombo conference to announce recognition, Mr Younger said there had been no point in Britain's waiting. There had been full consultations, but "in the course of these, it became clear that because of the varying attitudes of differing members of the Commonwealth, united action was not expected".[34] On December 21, the New Zealand government had not told Britain that it was against recognition, but simply that it wanted to know more about other Commonwealth governments' views. The Australian government may have been more definite.

Even after a decision not to follow Britain's lead had been taken in Wellington, the traditional rhetoric of loyalty to the Mother country's guidance was being voiced by the Prime Minister in his New Year's message to the nation. "Where Britain goes, we go", he said, "in peace as in war".[35]

Doidge, in his press statement of December 29, acknowledged that it was possible to make a case, almost equally strong, either for or against recognition. In favour of such a move, he said, was the fact that China was in for a long period of Communist dominance; that British administrators in the East had urged the earliest possible de jure

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[34] Luard, E. *Britain and China*, p80

[35] *Evening Star* December 30, 1949, p4

acceptance; that a refusal of recognition would isolate China from the rest of the world; and that as far as the United Nations Organisation was concerned, it would be better to concede recognition now, rather than have rival groups lining up over the matter.

The External Affairs Minister then stated his reasons against recognition. First, he said, recognition would break faith with the Chinese Nationalists, and would mean abandoning a war-time ally. Secondly, there was the fact that the Communists had seized power in China, an act that peace-loving nations could not condone. In making this point, Doidge was echoing Fraser's view that the Communists had mounted some sort of coup contrary to the wishes of the people. The Minister ignored the fact that there were no facilities in China for a change of government by any other means. Doidge's third and fourth reasons for holding off recognition were probably the most important ones. Recognition, he said, would be "a gratuitous act of encouragement to the forces of disruption throughout Asia".[36] Communist-inspired insurgency against non-Communist governments was seen as "disruption", which New Zealand had an interest in discouraging. Back in September, a National Party backbencher, E.P. Aderman, had attacked Labour's G.H.O. Wilson for not seeing "some danger in the revolutions taking place in Malaya, Burma and the surrounding countries".[37] Doidge repeated another point raised by Fraser: that recognition would antagonise and irritate the United States and increase her determination to strengthen Japan at the expense of New Zealand's security. The government was concerned that the United

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[36] N.Z. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *New Zealand Foreign Policy Statements and Documents* pp204-206

[37] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 287, p1928, 6 September, 1949

States might not agree to keep Japan disarmed, and there was thus a need to keep New Zealand's influence with the American government at a maximum. There was another, interrelated, point upon which New Zealand needed American goodwill: the proposed Pacific Security Treaty. New Zealand was anxious to induce the United States to enter into a Pacific Security pact, and was aware that this was an uphill fight, as the Americans at that time were unwilling to take on commitments in the Pacific. Bruce Brown says:

> "Obviously, in these circumstances, any New Zealand... government with such a primary defence objective in mind would have hesitated before risking upsetting the Americans, particularly when no very tangible return from a gesture of recognition could be foreseen".[38]

Doidge's final point against New Zealand's going ahead with recognition was that it would mean the transfer to the Soviet bloc of the Chinese seat in the United Nations Security Council.

Continuing with his statement, the Minister of External Affairs looked at the British attitude. He said that recognition had been debated in the British House of Commons in November and "it was clear that the British government was disposed to an affirmative policy". Doidge said that this policy had the "reluctant approval" of Conservative leader Churchill, who had said that recognition was not necessarily an act of approval, but was granted to secure a convenience. It should be noted, Doidge said, that Churchill had also emphasised that no step be taken except in consultation with the whole of the Commonwealth and also with the United States. With this, the Minister of External Affairs came back to the attitude

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[38] Brown, B. *New Zealand Foreign Policy in Retrospect*, p20

of the United States, and he expressed doubt that Britain's policy, in view of this attitude, was the right one.

> "America's attitude was possibly correctly summed up by *The Economist* when it said, 'a large section of American opinion will regard recognition as a selfish British effort to steal a march on America in Chinese favour. If, later on, there is a Far Eastern crisis, and Britain asks American support, there will be a strong inclination in America to say that Britain, having taken its own way, must bear any unpleasant consequences'".[39]

Far from being a situation of having to choose between the leads of New Zealand's two mentor powers - the United States and Britain - the government believed that there was no question of choice. Even Britain, the government believed, could not afford a Pacific policy that ran counter to American views. This indicated a very hard-headed appraisal of where real power in the Pacific lay, despite the rhetoric of greater solidarity with Britain. If there was a Pacific crisis, American support would be needed.

Doidge said that "on the evidence, it may seem that recognition is the practical, and in the end, the inescapable course. But the question still remains: Is it the moral course?".

The Minister of External Affairs showed that he was not disposed on this question to follow the traditional British empirical approach to the granting of recognition. Like his Labour predecessor, Doidge evidently thought that recognition should involve a judgement of the nature and policies of any government. The Labour government had refused to recognise the Franco regime in Spain because of the way it came to power, its doubtful representativeness, and its policies. All of these factors had been mentioned in connection with China.

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[39] *New Zealand Foreign Policy: Statements and Documents* p206

R.M. Algie, the Minister of Education in Holland's Cabinet, recalled in 1974 that party feeling was very much against New Zealand's recognising China, because it was thought that recognition would imply approval of the regime and acceptance of its policies.[40] Those members of Cabinet who did not take this view were reluctant to get "off-side" with the rest of the party on the issue.

On December 31, 1949, India granted diplomatic recognition to the People's Republic of China, the first Commonwealth country to do so. Pakistan followed shortly afterwards. Three days before the Colombo Conference was due to open, on January 6, 1950, the United Kingdom recognised China. There was no immediate public reaction from the government in New Zealand. In Australia, Prime Minister Menzies replied "no comment" to a question about the Australian government's reaction to London's move.[41]

The Commonwealth Foreign Ministers met in Ceylon on January 9, 1950. The New Zealand government had by this stage adopted a definite viewpoint on the recognition of China, although the position was, publicly at least, not a fixed one. Prime Minister Holland said on January 11:

> "Before Mr Doidge left New Zealand, he discussed subjects likely to be considered at Ceylon with Cabinet, and he left having clearly in mind the government's views on those questions, but at the same time preserving an open mind to consider views that might be put forward at the conference by representatives of other Empire countries".[42]

The government's view on the question of recognition of Communist China was that it didn't want to recognise, and because of this it did not want Britain or the Commonwealth to recognise either.

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[40] Sir Ronald Algie, pers. comm. 25.7.74

[41] Albinski, H.S. *Australia and the China Problem During the Korean War* p3

[42] *O.D.T.* January 12, 1950, p4

A.D. McIntosh [now Sir Alister McIntosh] recalls that the government was angry with Britain for "jumping the gun" on the conference because it had been planned to persuade the United Kingdom there not to go ahead.[43] New Zealand and Australia, says McIntosh, would have argued strenuously against recognition. There was no real question, then, of gathering views at the conference to help New Zealand make up its own mind on recognition: New Zealand was planning to convert others to its predetermined position.

At the conference, Doidge, along with Australian Minister of External Affairs, Spender, championed the cause of the Commonwealth speaking with a common voice on major international questions, and on this basis were critical of the United Kingdom's premature recognition. Doidge conceded that diplomatic recognition of the People's Republic was inevitable, but felt that the timing was all important. In other words, later was better than sooner. The Minister went on to point out that domestic political considerations made it very difficult for the New Zealand government to grant immediate recognition. The recent election had been won on an anti-Communist platform, and recognition of a Communist government would be very embarrassing.

Doidge reiterated some of the arguments against recognition that he had listed on December 29: He mentioned the encouragement of the destructive forces led by the Chinese Communists in other parts of Asia, and the antagonism that would be felt by the United States government. Doidge said that he appreciated that the purpose of

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[43] McIntosh Interview 21.2.74

recognition was not to convey approval of the government recognised, but he believed that this might not be adequately understood among peoples of South-east Asia and other parts of the world in danger of being engulfed by Communism.[44]

Discussion of future policy towards China revolved around the likelihood of China's remaining independent of the Soviet Union. The press reported that there was division between those who thought that the Peking government was destined to become simply the obedient puppet of Moscow and those who thought China would be more Chinese than Communist.[45] British Foreign Secretary Bevin and Indian Prime Minister Nehru stated that they thought that China's national traditions were too great for her to fall into the role of Russian camp follower, and they recommended a policy of friendship towards her. Bevin said he thought New Zealand and Australia could make valuable contributions in developing friendly relations with China. Doidge and Spender belonged to the group that counselled the utmost caution in dealing with Peking. They said they feared that Communist China would become a menace to South-east Asia, where there was a large potential Chinese fifth column.[46] It seems likely that Doidge and Spender were the unnamed protagonists of the puppet theory. Bevin and Nehru advocated friendship with China because they believed China was independent. If Doidge and Spender were unwilling to move close to China, it could well have been because they did not accept that China could be independent of Russia. Indeed, later in the year, Doidge was to say that the

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[44] Information supplied by the Research Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

[45] *O.D.T.* January 11, 1950, p5

[46] *O.D.T.* January 12, 1950, p5

triumph of Communism in China had given Soviet imperialism the chance in Asia it had been waiting for.[47]

When Doidge returned to New Zealand later in the month, he issued no clarification of New Zealand's China position.

China's actions in the following months served to decrease further the likelihood of New Zealand's recognising its government. The Communist regime continued to seize the consular properties of Western states, conveying an image of being indifferent to international obligations. The seizure of American property in Peking stimulated the United States to instruct its missions abroad to explain to their host governments that it was the American belief that "recognition of the Communists or any change in the existing position regarding diplomatic relations with the Nationalist government would be premature".[48] With no United States recognition in sight, New Zealand would not be encouraged to take the recognition plunge.

In February, China concluded a treaty of alliance with the Soviet Union. This did not help the British argument that China could be wooed from Russia's side by Western recognition. The same month, the Chinese government extended diplomatic recognition to the Vietminh insurgent government in French Indo-China. This act created suspicion in New Zealand and Australia that China intended to aid the "disruptive forces" that they opposed in South-east Asia.

P.C. Spender, the Australian Minister of External Affairs, told the Australian House of Representatives on March 9:

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[47] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 291, p2139, September 5, 1950

[48] Albinski, H.S. *Australian Attitudes and Policies towards China* p53

> "There is still doubt and uncertainty about the way China is likely to act under the new regime. China could foment disaffection and disorder in other countries. This government's attitude is necessarily influenced by its judgement of what China will try to do to stir up unrest in Asia ... such evidence as we have of the Communists' behaviour up to date, including their treatment of the United States property and citizens, and their eager recognition of the rebel forces in Vietnam, leaves us uncertain whether the Peking government will conduct itself in accordance with the recognised principles of international law and refrain from interfering in the affairs of neighbouring states".[49]

Spender stressed the importance of developments in the Indo-China situation to the Australian government's attitude towards China. "Above all, we will watch closely for evidence of China's interference in the affairs of the neighbouring state of Vietnam".

In February, New Zealand and Australia had been quick to recognise the non-Communist, French-sponsored governments in Indo-China as they were set up. P.C. Spender admitted that these states were not fully independent of France, and thus not in normal circumstances qualified for recognition, but he said that the prompt recognition by Australia and "other powers" was meant to "encourage moderate Nationalist leaders in Indo-China who did not want their country [sic] to become a satellite of Moscow or Peking".[50] Prompt recognition of Peking, by the same token, was thought likely to discourage moderate governments which felt threatened by China. Doidge told the Hutt Valley Junior Chamber of Commerce on March 23, 1950, that

> "We in New Zealand have not yet recognised Communist China, and we will keep away from it as long as we can, even if only out of consideration for the feelings of the other nations of Asia".[51]

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[49] *Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates (House of Representatives)* vol. 206, p626, 9 March, 1950

[50] Albinski, H.S. *Australia and the China Problem During the Korean War* p11

[51] *Dominion*, 24 March, 1950, quoted in *N.Z. Foreign Policy: Statements and Documents* p208

Six months later, looking back on the pre-Korean War period, Doidge told the New Zealand House of Representatives that the government had "refused recognition [of China] because we felt we had to keep faith with those countries still fighting to maintain their independence".[52] In an earlier part of the same speech, Doidge accused "Communistic imperialism" of threatening the independence of "millions of newly-freed peoples in Asia and South-east Asia", and declared that ".. the fate of our neighbours - and they are our neighbours - is a matter of the greatest and gravest concern to this country.." Doidge's reference to "Communistic imperialism" showed that he saw Communism as a monolithic entity, bent on expansion in Asia.

New Zealand believed that it had an interest in the preservation of a non-Communist South-east Asia, and since Communist China posed a threat to that interest, New Zealand was not inclined to legitimise the regime.

In March, 1950, another Commonwealth member, Canada, was considering extending recognition to China, but New Zealand had no inclination at that stage to take part in a joint recognition. Doidge told Australian Minister of External Affairs Spender early in the month that while he had not yet had the opportunity of discussing the timing of recognition with Cabinet, his personal view was that New Zealand should be in no hurry to recognise, though he saw some advantages in several of the Dominions acting concurrently at some future date.[53]

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[52] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 291, p2143, September 5, 1950

[53] Information provided by the Research Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Up to the outbreak of the Korean War, then, the New Zealand government had a policy of no early recognition of China. This decision seems to have been taken by Cabinet just prior to the Colombo Conference in January.

Conclusion

New Zealand's non-recognition of the new Communist government of China in the period up to the outbreak of the Korean War in mid-1950 had several bases. One of the most important was the desire to avoid encouraging Communist insurgent groups in South-east Asia and to support the non-Communist governments who were under attack by Communist forces. Both Fraser and Doidge thought that a too-ready acceptance by the Western countries of the Communist takeover in China would strengthen the position of other would-be revolutionaries and help lead to a Communist Asia, which was not seen as being in New Zealand's interests. Doidge in March and September 1950 stressed New Zealand's concern for the countries in Asia fighting to keep their independence, and the need to "keep faith" with them. Another important reason was the negative attitude of the United States. It does not seem that the American government ever formally discussed its attitude with New Zealand, but both the Labour and National Ministers of External Affairs believed that recognition was likely to antagonise the United States at a time when a favourable United States attitude with regard to the Japanese Peace Treaty was considered very important for New Zealand's security. Even at this stage, government was sensitive to even the presumed opinion of the United States.

Both Labour and National governments were also concerned that the West should not throw over lightly its friend and former ally, the Nationalist government of China, which remained in existence

after December, 1949, though confined to the island province of Taiwan. Both governments were reluctant to put a seal of approval on a regime that had overthrown by military force what they saw as the legitimate government of China. Fraser definitely, and Doidge probably, thought that the Communist takeover had been engineered to a large extent by the Russians, rather than being a genuine expression of the popular will.

The domestic political situation also made the government reluctant to recognise the Chinese government. The National Party had come to power on an anti-Communist theme, and Doidge told the Colombo Conference that the government would have found the early recognition of a Communist government embarrassing.

The government's advisers in the Department of External Affairs tended to favour early recognition so that the Western nations could establish contact with the Chinese government and perhaps be able to influence it. A Western diplomatic presence would help to offset Soviet influence. The advisers believed the Chinese revolution to have been an indigenous one, and that there was some potential for differences with the Russians. The politicians were more inclined to believe that the Chinese government was a Russian puppet, and therefore not likely to be receptive to Western friendship.

CHAPTER 2

THE CHINA POLICY OF THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT 1951-57 - LOYALTY TO THE PROTECTOR

Introduction

In the period from the beginning of the Korean War to the end of the National government's tenure of office in 1957, New Zealand's China policy was dominated by the country's interest in ensuring its protection by the United States. The Korean War proved to New Zealand's policy-makers that the attentions of what they saw as Communist imperialism had turned to the Pacific and that the direct danger to New Zealand had thus substantially increased. In this situation, the securing of American protection, both directly through treaties and indirectly by ensuring that the Americans were committed to the resistance of the Communist advance in Asia, became more urgent for New Zealand than it had ever been. New Zealand's China policy was thus predicated on the need to support American policies in the Pacific both before and after the signing of ANZUS in 1951. After the casualties of the Korean War, the American government had become extremely hostile to diplomatic recognition of China and to its admission to the United Nations. Although the New Zealand government, after the end of the war, showed some reservations about American policy, it had no intention of opposing it. Not only did New Zealand not oppose American policy, but it tried to prevent other allies opposing it too, arguing that the unity of the free world was more important than any particular free world policy.

The government found little difficulty in following the American line because other policy determinants pushed it in that direction rather than with Britain. The traditional moral approach to aggressors led the government to insist that China prove its peaceful intentions before it was admitted to the United Nations, while other governments thought that admission would be a practical way of ensuring peaceful behaviour. New Zealand was also concerned that recognition could help undermine the governments of the non-Communist countries of South-east Asia.

The coming of the Korean War in June, 1950, rather than freezing New Zealand's China policy in the process of formation, confirmed and hardened an existing policy by supplying what was seen as proof to the thesis that Communist China was an imperialist power which must be resisted. China was condemned in the first instance as a backer of North Korean aggression, and then in its own right as an identifiable aggressor after its troops intervened in the conflict in November, 1950.

On September 11, 1950, Doidge said he was sure that the majority of members of the United Nations would wish to see the Korean issue settled before they would vote for the admission of the Chinese government to the United Nations. "Our position on this question is fairly clear since we have not taken the step of recognising the Chinese government".[1] At the opening of the Fifth Session of the

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[1] *Otago Daily Times* (O.D.T.) September 12, 1950. p6.

United Nations General Assembly, New Zealand voted with the United States and Australia, and against Britain and India, for not replacing the Chinese Nationalist representatives with Chinese Communist ones.

The National government eagerly took over the highly moral approach to international relations which had been the trademark of the previous Labour administration. This was shown up by the New Zealand representative's attitude during the Ad Hoc Political Committee's deliberations on the criteria for judging the rights of claimants to represent member states.

The British representative stated that moral considerations should not enter into the question of representation. Once a state had been admitted to membership, logic and the requirements of order demanded that any government which was able to exercise effective control over the state and was thus in a position to carry out the obligations imposed by the Charter, should be recognised as the government entitled to represent that state in the United Nations.

The New Zealand representative disagreed. Sir Carl Berendsen said that New Zealand could not accept the view that once a state had been admitted to the United Nations its membership held good whatever the actions of the government in power. Once a state had ceased to be a peace-loving state, able and willing to fulfil its international obligations, it should no longer be entitled either to the privileges of membership or to recognition of its representatives. Moreover, the moral aspect should be considered not only when there had been a change of government resulting from external aggression, but also when a change had been brought about by internal violence, or indeed, by

any means other than normal constitutional processes.[2] The government's view, as expressed by Berendsen, that a state that did not live up to the expectations of the Charter should be deprived of the privileges of membership, was fully in accord with the attitude taken by the Labour government in drawing up the United Nations Charter in 1945. In the course of his speech, Berendsen had stressed that the Committee's approach should take into account the current cases the United Nations had to consider: specifically, the question of Chinese representation.

Six months later, in July 1951, Berendsen, in a speech given in his capacity as New Zealand Ambassador to the United States, was to reaffirm the primacy of the moral aspect in New Zealand's approach to the recognition question. The Ambassador told a San Francisco audience: "The doctrine that the Communist regime should be recognised because it controls China is a hangover of the bad old days of power politics.[3]

The New Zealand approach to recognition was not, it seems, just a case of selective morality on the part of the National government because the target was a Communist state. In 1950, New Zealand did not vote with the United States in favour of rescinding the 1946 United Nations resolution debarring the recognition of the Fascist government of Spain.[4] However, neither did New Zealand vote against the

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[2] *The United Nations.* Summary of the Report of the New Zealand Delegation to the Fifth Regular Session of the General Assembly, Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives, (AJHR)A-2 1951 p76.

[3] Clemow, C.W.A. "New Zealand, the Commonwealth and the Korean War", p.368, quoting 'Freedom', 18 July 1951 p7.

[4] *The United Nations.* Summary of the Report of the New Zealand Delegation to the Fifth Regular Session of the General Assembly. p67 AJHR A-2 1951.

rescinding motion. Along with Britain, Australia and India, it abstained. Canada voted with the United States to rescind. The 1946 resolution on Spain had recommended that United Nations members withdraw their ambassadors from Madrid, and that Spain be debarred from membership of all international agencies associated with the United Nations until a government more representative of the people was formed. Explaining the British abstention, the British delegate said that nothing had taken place to justify any change in the United Kingdom's attitude towards the Spanish regime and towards the earlier resolution of the Assembly.[5] The rescinding motion was nevertheless adopted by 38 votes to 10, with 12 abstentions.

The other consequence of the Korean War which bore heavily on New Zealand's China policy was the hardening of the American attitude towards China. The New Zealand government's desire to give all possible diplomatic support to the only Western power with the strength to resist what it saw as global Communist imperialism meant that its China policy became subordinate to American China policy. Doidge recognised, even before the direct Chinese intervention in the war, that the Korean situation had ended any American disposition to move towards acceptance of the Chinese Communist government.

"I had the feeling some months ago that the United States of America and France, which had refused recognition, might be tempted to, but then came the extension of the trouble in Indo-China and the war of aggression in Korea".[6]

At the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference held in

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[5] Yearbook of the United Nations 1950 pp342-344.

[6] *New Zealand Parliamentary Debates (NZPD)* Vol.291 p2143, 5 Sept.1950

January, 1951, the New Zealand government's desire to express solidarity with the United States even at the sacrifice of a pragmatic settlement with China was evident. On arriving at the Conference, which had Commonwealth policy towards China on the agenda, Prime Minister Holland gave the impression of governmental flexibility on the issue when he said that his government was "prepared to reconsider the whole position of China".[7] The Prime Minister went on to say that he thought that "ways and means should be found to develop a common policy towards China," a reference to Anglo-American differences on the question. Although the first statement could have been taken as an expression of sympathy for the British policy of getting Peking into the United Nations as fast as possible, New Zealand's aim in fact was to unite the Commonwealth behind United States policy.

A Press Association special correspondent at the Conference reported that New Zealand would take the earliest opportunity of expressing her "firm opinion" that the Commonwealth should maintain the closest cooperation with the United States in the international sphere, because the United States was carrying the burden of opposition to Communist imperialism and it was imperative to shore up that determination.

If the United States were convinced afresh that she had the solid support, the confidence and the goodwill of the Commonwealth, New Zealand believed, it could do much to check the actual and latent tendency towards isolationism from which America had only recently emerged. This attitude towards the United States, the correspondent reported, "is one of the main reasons why New Zealand has not so far

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[7] *O.D.T.* January 4, 1951, p5

recognised the Peking government, and is opposed to the grant of a seat on the Security Council to Mao Tse-tung".[8]

It was reported that "some delegates" at the Conference feared that a Conference declaration in favour of recognition might widen the division between the United States and the Commonwealth.[9] Holland was one of these. The Prime Minister said at the Conference that the Commonwealth must do nothing to prejudice the willingness of the United States to maintain her support for the countries of the free world which was so important for both their own and New Zealand's security.[10] New Zealand's role at this Conference was similar to the one it performed at Colombo - trying to head off Anglo-Indian initiatives that might be seen as objectionable by the United States. British Foreign Secretary Bevin's attitude was that recognition of Communist China was a necessary condition of a Far Eastern settlement. It was unrealistic, he said, to expect the Peking regime to discuss any settlement unless its own status was acknowledged by all parties to the negotiations. New Zealand and Australia argued that a Conference declaration in favour of recognition would be valueless without concurrent action by the United States. The ANZAC countries were less concerned about arriving at a pragmatic China policy which the Commonwealth could try to foist on the United States, than with giving the United States a psychological boost. Their main anxiety, according to a Press Report, was that the Conference should not give the impression that Commonwealth policy opposed that of the United States.[11]

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[8] *O.D.T.* January 6, 1951 p5 (NZPA-Reuter London)

[9] Ibid p7.

[10] Information supplied by the Research Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

[11] *O.D.T.* January 8, 1951 p5

New Zealand's China policy at this stage was based on fear: not so much of China in the short term, as of being deprived of American protection from any threat that might appear in the Pacific. New Zealand's China policy hardened during the Korean War because once the threat of aggression in the Pacific had materialised, the interest in keeping the United States committed to the defence of Asia was intensified. As Doidge had said in September 1950: "... it would be dangerous complacency to imagine that what is happening in Korea cannot be repeated. It can be repeated elsewhere in Asia..".[12]

At the Conference, New Zealand, although not yet a formal ally of the United States, had given an indication of what it thought the role of a junior partner in an alliance was: acquiesence in the policy line of the dominant partner and the provision of public support for that line.

Despite the government's worries about provoking a break with the United States at a critical time, New Zealand was still enough of a loyal Commonwealth member to endorse the Commonwealth Peace Plan for Korea, which suggested a Far Eastern Conference to hammer out a settlement of issues like Chinese Representation at the United Nations.

After the Chinese rejection of the United Nations peace offer based on the Commonwealth plan, New Zealand was free to endorse the harder American line wholeheartedly. When the American government arranged for a United Nations resolution condemning China as an aggressor, the New Zealand government, unlike the British, had no

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[12] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 291, p2138, 5 September, 1950

qualms about endorsing it. Doidge declared that the contention that the Chinese Communists had committed aggression "seems to us no more than the truth, and the government has instructed Sir Carl Berendsen to support this provision of the United States resolution".[13]

In May, 1951, when the United Nations followed up its aggression resolution with one recommending the application of a limited economic embargo against China and North Korea, the New Zealand government not only took the necessary administrative action to comply with the provision of the embargo but extended the limits of it to cover the export of wool, although wool was not listed as a strategic material by the United Nations.[14] The Australian government did not feel it necessary to follow suit.[15]

Even as the Korean War appeared to cement New Zealand's opposition to the People's Republic into a permanent mould, there came an indication that there were elements in the government inclined to a more liberal policy. At a United Nations Association meeting in February, 1951, the Attorney-General and Acting Minister of External Affairs, T. C. Webb, said he believed that China should have been diplomatically recognised and admitted to the United Nations prior to the Korean War. While emphasising that he was speaking for himself only and not for the government, and also making the valid point that he was not necessarily expressing the views of his colleagues, Webb said that it would be "recognising only what was a fact" if the regime

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[13] *O.D.T.* January 25, 1951, p6

[14] *External Affairs Review* (E.A.R.) July 1951, p2

[15] Albinski, H.S. "*Australian Attitudes and Policies towards China*", p101-102.

of Mao Tse-tung were recognised as the government of China.[16] The voice of the minority in the party which had been unhappy with the moral criteria used to deny recognition in 1950 had finally been heard. Webb's preference for the traditional British approach was to surface again. The Minister admitted that the matter of recognition had been "compromised" by the action China had since taken. As Canadian Minister of External Affairs Pearson pointed out the same month, Chinese intervention in Korea had made it inconceivable that countries which had hitherto withheld recognition could at that time decide to change their policies.[17]

By 1951 New Zealand ground troops were in action against the Chinese in Korea, and recognition of the enemy while in the field against him would have been inappropriate. Only with the ending of the Korean War could conditions for fluidity in New Zealand's China policy be partly met.

In the meantime, however, New Zealand had taken a foreign policy step that would bear heavily on any reconsideration of China policy. During 1951, negotiations were in train for a formal alliance with the United States, and these culminated in September with the signing of the Pacific Security Treaty, subsequently known as ANZUS. Far from freeing New Zealand from the fear that it, along with non-Communist Asia, might be abandoned by the United States if the government denied the United States support for its foreign policy, the formal link was to be perceived as imposing a duty on New Zealand to prove itself a good ally.

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[16] *O.D.T.* February 16, 1951, p6

[17] Albinski, H.S. "*Australia and the China Problem During the Korean War*", p53.

After the 1951 general election, held in September, Webb replaced Doidge as Minister of External Affairs. In April, 1953 he told the House of Representatives that the government believed that China, by her aggression in Korea, had forfeited "any right she might earlier have had" to recognition. "As I see it", the Minster said, "her task now is to work her passage back into the good graces of the United Nations before any thought of recognition can be entertained". Webb also declared that China had similarly forfeited "for the time being at any rate", any claim it might have had under the Cairo declaration to Formosa. In any case, the government believed that under the principles of the United Nations Charter, some account should be taken of the wishes of the Formosan people themselves.[18]

Webb proved that he was still in favour of a positive approach towards China, however, in a speech he made to the Auckland division of the National Party in June, 1953.

The Minister said that there was a strongly-held view that the Western powers would never succeed in detaching China from the Soviet orbit if they cold-shouldered her and refused to admit her representative to the United Nations. Some said that China would stick in the Soviet orbit regardless of the actions of Western nations, but he, Webb, did not agree. The death of Stalin had provided the Chinese with an opportunity of asserting their own views. Webb said that his own view was that it was the Chinese that were very largely responsible for the fact that armistice negotiations in Korea had been resumed. The Minister emphasised

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[18] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 299, p354, 29 April, 1953

that he was not advocating appeasement, but he believed that if China could be converted into a "Tito regime" it would be worthwhile making the effort. Nobody in New Zealand, he said, wanted to see an all-out war with China.[19]

Webb repeated these views to the American ambassador that same month, and added that non-recognition of Communist China would increase the risk of a Chinese attack on South-east Asia. The United States administration at this stage was seeking assurances from its allies that they would not recognise the People's Republic after the conclusion of an armistice in Korea - an event now thought to be very close. The Minister of External Affairs told the American government that New Zealand had no thought of immediate recognition.[20]

An armistice between China and the United Nations forces in Korea was finally agreed upon in July, 1953. In the international affairs debate in the House of Representatives a month later, the Minister of External Affairs looked cautiously forward to China's acceptance by the international community. but held out no hope of any immediate moves. It would be up to China to prove itself acceptable. Webb said that China was becoming "a force in the world", and that accordingly, there could be "no doubt whatever" that sooner or later China would have to be admitted to the United Nations.

Asked by Labour's W. T. Anderton how soon this would be, Webb reiterated that he did not agree with those advocating

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[19] *O.D.T.* June 18, 1953 p5

[20] Interview, Officer, Research Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

immediate admission, but suggested that the question could be considered after the forthcoming Korean Peace Settlement Conference in May, 1954, at which China would be given an opportunity to prove her good faith.

> "... the admission of representatives of Communist China to the United Nations, and its recognition, should not be pushed with undue haste. On the other hand, it should not be delayed by what I might call perverse procrastination. ... For my part, the sooner she measures up to the responsibilities we think are the minimum she ought to measure up to, the better. We do not want to be too exacting in our requirements".[21]

The following speaker from the government side, E.H. Halstead, defined the requirements for recognition as he saw them. Halstead agreed that recognition of Communist China had to be faced up to at some stage, but said that recognition after the Korean armistice was "not good enough". China was still an aggressor in Malaya and in Indo-China, and she was stirring up a lot of trouble in Indonesia.

> "Until Red China withdraws the pressure she is applying to the troublespots of Indonesia, Malaya and Indo-China, I think recognition should be withheld".[22]

Earlier in the debate, Halstead had referred to the fact that the Vietminh troops fighting the French Union forces in Indo-China were supplied, equipped and stimulated by China. Chinese help for the insurgents was apparently considered to constitute aggression, and was an adequate ground for denying China recognition.

Halstead's view was backed up by his party colleague, E.P. Aderman, who said that supplies of all types of military equipment had gone

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[21] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 299, p450, 13 August, 1953

[22] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 299, p456, 13 August, 1953

through China to the "aggressive" forces in Indo-China. He asked if China should not be challenged to remove some of the elements of suspicion, and went on to declare that he was not in favour of the recognition of China.[23]

The New Zealand's government policy towards China was affirmed at the second meeting of the ANZUS Council in September, 1953. The final communique declared that each Minister had expressed the view of his government that under present circumstances, no question of the recognition of Communist China or of the admission of its representatives to the United Nations would be entertained.[24] In the House of Representatives, Labour backbencher C.R. Carr claimed that this represented a change in New Zealand's declared policy. The Prime Minister denied it in view of the fact that the communique had qualified its decision with the reference to "present circumstances". Holland said:

> "Before leaving this country, the Minister of External Affairs informed the House of the government's view that, while there was no doubt that Communist China would have to be admitted to the United Nations sooner or later, the question of her admission should be delayed until we had had an opportunity to observe her conduct in the Korean political negotiations".[25]

Earlier, Holland had denied that New Zealand's policy was in any way linked to that of the United States.

> "If you .. ask whether, on the question of recognition of Communist China or something like that, it is the declared policy of the government, as announced by the Prime Minister, to follow America right or wrong, then the imputation is entirely wrong and unjust".[26]

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[23] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 299, p463, 13 August, 1953

[24] *E.A.R.* September, 1953, p26

[25] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 300, p1556, 30 September, 1953

[26] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 300, p1328, 18 September, 1953

On the China recognition issue, the government believed that the United States was taking a justifiable course, and it could be argued that New Zealand's policy position was not the result of its being an acquiescent ally so much as of its having a concurring view. Even if the government had not held a concurring view, however, the future was to prove that its actions would not have been different.

The Korean War had increased the hostility of the American government towards the Chinese Communists and created an American interest in isolating China diplomatically. Once this interest had been made plain and declared important, the American government believed that it should be able to count on its allies, of whom New Zealand was one, not to act against those interests.

In a speech to the Overseas Press Club in Washington in March, 1954, Secretary of State Dulles made it plain that, as far as the American government was concerned, friendly gestures towards China were tantamount to unfriendly ones towards the United States. Dulles said that diplomatic recognition would give "increased prestige and influence to a regime that actively attacks our vital interests".[27] The Secretary had defined China as a continuing enemy of the United States, and the granting of diplomatic recognition as an act likely to strengthen that enemy.

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[27] *E.A.R.* April, 1954, p12

In the same speech, Dulles attacked the seating of China in the United Nations, reminding his audience that Chinese action in Korea had cost 100,000 American casualties, and that membership was supposed to be restricted to peace-loving states.

> "The Chinese Communists' continuing lack of genuine will for peace is being demonstrated in Indo-China",

Dulles claimed.

The deterioration of the military situation of the French forces in Indo-China in early 1954 was attributed by the New Zealand government to the increased support being given to the Vietminh forces by the Chinese. External Affairs Minister Webb said on April 14 that a serious position had been created by the recent increase in material and service personnel being given by Communist China to the rebel Vietminh movement in Indo-China.[28] Since New Zealand recognised the French-supported governments in Indo-China, China's actions in the area supplied further reasons for not recognising her.

At the Geneva Conference on Korea and Indo-China which opened in April, New Zealand's Minister of External Affairs initially indicated that he did not think that China's international behaviour to that time had fulfilled the conditions New Zealand had earlier set down for favourable consideration of its admission to the United Nations. On May 7 Webb said:

> "The first qualification for admission to the membership of any society is willingness to uphold its principles and abide by its rules. I am bound to say that neither by its words

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[28] *E.A.R.* April, 1954, p4

> nor its actions has the government of the People's Republic of China yet given any evidence that it could be relied upon to fulfil this elemental qualification. Moreover, the chilly reception it has accorded those nations which have granted it diplomatic recognition has not been such as to encourage other nations to make the same gesture of trust".[29]

Webb's opinion, however, changed rapidly after he had been exposed to the views of other participants in the Geneva Conference. In the House of Representatives in July, he was much more positive about bringing China into the United Nations than he had been two months before.

> "I am firmly convinced that the absence of China from the United Nations is preventing what is called, in diplomatic language, a detente - a lessening of international tension".[30]

Webb then implied that this had been his view all along when he said: "I am more convinced of that as a result of my visit to Geneva". Not only that, but:

> "I am satisfied that the view is widely held that the non-recognition and non-admission of Communist China is not only standing in the way of a lessening of international tension, it is tending to keep up international tension, and thus endangering world peace".

These were strong words, especially when they could only be taken as criticism of the American attitude. Webb went on to say that no-one could seriously argue that Nationalist China on the island of Formosa

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[29] *E.A.R.* May, 1954, p13

[30] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 303, p212, 6 July, 1954

could speak for the five hundred million or six hundred million people on the mainland of China. It was "not satisfactory" that "that great nation should be debarred from the deliberations of what has been aptly called 'the town meeting of the world'". The Minister restated his views about the constraint that China's Korean behaviour had introduced, and said that he had conveyed to Chou En-lai the view that "it was up to China to demonstrate that we could rely on her to be a worthy member of the organisation".[31]

Minister of Education Algie interjected to the effect that China would have to give up her "disguised aggression", and Webb agreed with him. However, the Minister said,

> "in view of the part which China has played, and is still playing, in relation to the Indo-China negotiations, I find it hard to deny China's right to be admitted to the United Nations Organisation".

Webb conceded that there might be differences of opinion about whether China had yet earned the right to be admitted, but "I want to look at it ... from our own point of view". The greatest menace facing the free world, he believed, was Communism, and this could not be combatted by military means. One other method was diplomacy.

The Minister referred to the British Foreign Secretary's belief, expressed in a recent House of Commons speech, that differences existed between the Communist great powers.

> "It seems to me that here is a situation which we should endeavour to exploit. We should endeavour to drive a wedge

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[31] Ibid.

> between China and Russia. We may not succeed, but at least we avoid what I believe is a danger, and that is that by cold-shouldering China we drive her more firmly into the Russian orbit, and defeat our own object".

Webb was prepared to accept that Communism was perhaps not the monolithic unity most of his party - and the Americans - had previously held it to be.

> "I think we need to have a look at our policy because if that is correct, we are really cutting off our noses to spite our faces, and playing into the hands of the very nation whose basic philosophy is preventing the world settling down to a peaceful existence".

The Minister then stated firmly that he thought that "this policy of taking a hard and fast rigid line was only putting ourselves into a straitjacket and allowing ourselves no room for manoeuvre. We cannot deny that China has become a great nation. She has risen in stature, and is a force to be reckoned with in world affairs". The Minister made a plea for the Western allies to be guided by "logic and self-interest, and not emotion", in the matter, and as a first step, to give "early consideration to the question of allowing the representatives of the People's Republic of China into the Council Chambers of the United Nations".[32]

Webb, of course, was not announcing a change in government policy with his speech, but flying a kite publicly for such a change. This kite was probably aimed as much at his less liberal party colleagues as at the Americans.

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[32] Ibid., p213

Webb's approach to the China question was not governed by what New Zealand's specific interest was, but what the free world's interest as a whole was. He was not suggesting that New Zealand should have a China policy of her own. The Minister also approached China recognition in global rather than regional terms: China could be a valuable lever for the West against the Soviet Union. There was no desire to establish a relationship with China for its own sake.

Webb's spectacularly outspoken speech met with a very conspicuous lack of support from his colleagues. Only Algie, the Minister of Education, gave him limited backing. Algie admitted that he found it difficult to believe that there was any difference between Chinese and Russian Communism, but he was prepared to trust Webb's judgement in the matter. He did not think there was any basic opposition in New Zealand to China's admittance to the United Nations. Algie indicated that his view of China as an expansionist power remained unchanged, however. "I believe profoundly that Communist China wants South-east Asia for the natural wealth that is there".[33] The next day he said: "We know, or believe we know, that the state of affairs existing in South-east Asia today is such that if we did walk out, the local states could not maintain themselves against the pressure that would be applied from Communist China".[34] Like Webb, Algie seems to have thought that admittance to the United Nations of China might be a practical weapon in the fight to save South-east Asia from Communism.

From the backbenches, only W.B. Tennent had favourable words

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[33] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 303, p230, 6 July, 1954

[34] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 303, p254, 7 July, 1954

for a conciliatory policy towards China. He saw a linkage between China's non-acceptance by the international community and its aggressive foreign policy. Tennent was in favour, however, of granting China diplomatic recognition rather than admission to the United Nations, which he was more hesitant about. Tennent said that he could not help feeling, "much as we dislike Communists" that a grave mistake was made in not recognising Communist China. "I feel that had we done so, it might have made quite a difference to their attitude to this and other countries".[35]

Webb's speech won no support outside New Zealand, either. Australian Prime Minister Menzies, was quick to throw cold water on the idea of China's admission to the United Nations. On July 8, 1954, he said that Australia's attitude towards recognition and admission to the United Nations had not changed, and would not.

> "The whole problem of the future of Communist China is one that simply does not arise at the moment. When it does arise, Cabinet will consider it".[36]

Australia's Minister of External Affairs, Casey, had arrived in New Zealand the day after the Webb speech. On July 8 he, too, confirmed, after discussions with Webb, that Australia would not for the time being, consider the admittance of China to the United Nations. The Minister said that while he appreciated and respected New Zealand's attitude to China, he believed that China had yet to establish the bona fides of peaceful intent.

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[35] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 303, p221, 6 July, 1954

[36] *Current Notes on International Affairs*, July 1954, p467

> "China will have to establish that she is a peace-loving state for a longer period before Australia will consider her admittance to the United Nations".[37]

On the same day that Menzies and Casey made their comments President Eisenhower made a scorching denunciation of China, in the course of which he declared himself "unalterably opposed to admitting the Peking regime to the United Nations".[38] Almost certainly, the President's statement was not connected with the Webb speech - it was part of a domestic campaign sparked off by right-wing Republicans days earlier - but it served as a timely reminder to New Zealand of the American attitude.

Eisenhower had gone on to say that he believed that 95 percent of the American people shared his unalterable opposition. The Communists, he said, were occupying North Korea, had backed the enslavement of additional peoples in Indo-China and were guilty of the worst possible diplomatic conduct. He could not see how any impartial country could vote for China's entry into the United Nations. Nothing except a long and convincing record of deeds would convince Americans that the Communist Chinese were ready for admission, he said. The President further told the press conference he was addressing that proposals to take the United States out of the United Nations if Communist China was admitted required careful study. He said he was not ready to say what course of action should be taken.

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[37] *Sydney Morning Herald*, July 9, 1954, p3

[38] *New York Times*, July 8, 1954, pp1 and 12; reported in N.Z., July 9, see *O.D.T.* July 9, 1954, p5

If the President was not, others of importance were. Senate majority leader Knowland had stated at the beginning of the month that he had no doubt that Congress would act swiftly to take the United States out of the United Nations if Peking's delegates were seated. This had been confirmed by the Senate's Democratic leader Lyndon Johnson, when he said: "The American people will refuse to support the United Nations if Communist China becomes a member".[39]

New Zealand's two closest allies had made it very clear publicly that proposals such as Webb's were unwelcome to them, and the overseas policy statements had their effect in New Zealand.

The Wellington political correspondent of Dunedin's *Evening Star* noted that Webb's ministerial colleagues were far from happy over his speech. "Ministers other than Mr Webb ... are worried today because New Zealand has been placed out on a limb. These men, and some in the External Affairs and Armed Services departments are wondering unhappily what repercussions Mr Webb's statement will have on the American State Department ..".[40]

The American State Department was not long in making its feelings known. It protested strongly at the apparent departure from the agreed policy of the ANZUS meeting of the previous year. The Secretary of External Affairs reassured the Americans that the New Zealand government was fully conscious of the terms of the ANZUS communique of September, 1953, and that the government thought it premature to concede diplomatic recognition to Communist China before

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[39] For Knowland, see *New York Times*, July 2, 1954, pp1-2; Johnson's remarks were reported by the N.Z.P.A. - see O.D.T. July 5, 1954, p5

[40] *Evening Star*, July 10, 1954, p2

a permanent peace in South-east Asia was established.[41] Webb and Holland together saw the American Ambassador, and Webb explained that the emphasis of his speech had been distorted. New Zealand did not intend to grant recognition right away or vote for China's admission to the United Nations at the coming session of that body. At the same time, Webb emphasised that he thought recognition and admission was a question to which Western nations should be giving consideration.[42]

Apart from their concern about the American reaction to Webb's statement, the Minister's Cabinet colleagues still found the idea of the diplomatic recognition of China inherently distasteful. The *Star* correspondent's belief was that Holland was not enthusiastic on this issue, and that several senior members of Cabinet were either neutral or sharply opposed to the idea.[43]

Sir Alister McIntosh's memory is that 'unenthusiastic' was a definite understatement of the Prime Minister's reaction to Webb's apparent proposal. "Holland was furious", he recalls.[44] Whether Holland was opposed to the idea of recognition or just to a public airing of it which would upset the Americans is not certain.

It is evident that the External Affairs Minister was convinced - probably by the Prime Minister - that a clarification of his July 6 speech was necessary. On July 8 Webb told the House of Representatives:

> "The remarks I made about the question of admitting the People's Republic of China ... seem to have attracted most attention. I want to sound a note of caution, however".

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[41] Interview, Officer, Research Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

[42] Ibid.

[43] *Evening Star*, July 10, 1954, p2

[44] McIntosh interview, 21.2.74

While the Minister declared that he did not want to take back "one word" of what he had said, he did want to emphasise that it was "no easy matter to bring it about". It was not a problem that should be tackled in haste, he said. The Minister made it plain that the American reaction was the reason for lack of action on the issue.

> "I thought the member for Waitakere [H.G.R. Mason - Labour] made a useful comment when he said that it was not easy to bring about the admission of China because there are great emotional difficulties to overcome in the United States. We have to take account of that. The people of the United States take a much more serious view of the menace of Communism than some of us do, and certainly more than I do. They may be right and I may be wrong, but at any rate we have to take account of the fact that there are difficulties".[45]

The Minister then said that another point had to be made, and that was that there were other nations which had qualified for admission to the United Nations, but which had not been admitted. Here Webb was reverting to the old party dodge that there were many nations more deserving of admission than Communist China. In making this point, Webb was denying his own previous view that China's influential position in Asia made her admission a matter of urgency. In his speech of July 6, the Minister had made it plain that China's admission could be a key factor in the maintenance of world peace. Now he was saying - or being forced to say - that China should take her place in the queue with all other aspiring candidates. Webb went on to identify Nationalist China's existence as a constraint on admission.

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[45] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 303, p300, 8 July, 1954

> "If she had never been a member of the United Nations it might not be such a difficult matter, but she has been admitted, and I say candidly, I cannot visualise an attempt being made to exclude her".

Webb had made no concessions on the China issue in principle, but he had indicated that practical difficulties would prevent the adoption of a policy to implement those principles. Foremost among these was the necessity not to alienate American public opinion, which in turn controlled the attitude of the American government. China policy had to serve the larger objective of maintaining an effective American alliance. As Webb stated in his conclusion, New Zealand believed that it had to work for Anglo-American co-operation, and see that it was not weakened in any way, because that co-operation was the best hope for peace.

Webb had seen the admission of China to the United Nations as a move towards peace, but believed that the maintenance of free world unity was a much more important policy for the same goal.

Webb said that the maintenance of unity did not mean that New Zealand could in no circumstances disagree with the United States:

> "We shall not get anywhere that way. There is room for healthy disagreement, and I have given an indication that I do not agree with the strong, hard and fast, rigid line they are taking over the admission of China to the United Nations".

What maintenance of unity did seem to mean was that allies such as New Zealand should not translate disagreement into an opposing policy line. Webb made it clear that New Zealand's tack would not be to wilfully pursue her own line, but to work within the alliance to influence the alliance line. In practical terms, this meant trying

to modify American policy privately. The Minister said: "I hope that the little bit of influence that we are able to exert from this end will compose such differences as exist between us".[46]

Labour's W.T. Anderton remarked of Webb's speech later in the month: "It almost looked as though the Minister had changed slightly the views he had expressed previously on the acceptance of Communist China, and that would be regrettable ...".[47]

Webb had indeed been forced to correct the impression that the government intended to change its China policy. Whereas his original statement had been a plea for a reconsideration of current policy, the follow-up had been an outline of why such a reconsideration was not possible. According to the Secretary of External Affairs at the time, Webb "burnt his fingers very badly" over the speech.[48]

The episode shows how strongly New Zealand was committed to a collective approach to foreign affairs issues. Not only did the National government believe that New Zealand should not take independent initiatives in the face of American opposition, it believed that New Zealand should not even publicly expresses differences with its allies.

Although Webb's speech probably owed a lot to Sir Anthony Eden's views as expressed at Geneva, the British government itself had no intention of translating those views into a United Nations policy line that would cross the American government's line.

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[46] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 303, p303, 8 July, 1954

[47] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 303, p1352, 24 August, 1954

[48] Interview, Sir Alister McIntosh, 21.2.74

Prime Minister Winston Churchill declared in the House of Commons on July 12 that the question of Communist China's admission to the United Nations had suddenly received a degree of publicity out of proportion to its importance or urgency. Churchill went on to say that British policy on the subject of admission had been unchanged since 1951, when Foreign Secretary Herbert Morrison had stated that Communist China should be admitted to the United Nations, but that in view of that government's persistence in behaviour inconsistent with the purpose and principles of the Charter, it appeared to the British government that consideration of the questions should be postponed. Churchill said that even if agreement should be reached at the Geneva Conference on Korea or Indo-China,

> "the arrangements would still depend on good faith and co-operation, for which time would certainly be required. In these circumstances, although her Majesty's government still believe the Central People's government should represent China at the United Nations, they certainly do not consider that this is the moment for the matter to be reconsidered".[49]

New Zealand's Minister of External Affairs refused to give up. On July 14 he was reported as saying that if people were guided by logic rather than emotion, they would come round to the view that

> "instead of giving Communist China the 'cold shoulder' and tending to consolidate the Communist bloc, it would be better to give early consideration to her admission to the United Nations".

He also repeated that he now found it hard to deny the claim of China to be admitted.[50]

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[49] House of Commons Debates, Fifth Series, volume 530, No. 146, column 34, p46, 12 July, 1954

[50] *O.D.T.* July 15, 1954, p5

New Zealand's policy did not change, and at the end of the parliamentary term a few months later, Webb gave up both the portfolio of External Affairs and his parliamentary seat to take up the post of High Commissioner in London. This position had been made vacant by the death of Sir Frederick Doidge in May. In accepting the office, the Minister was following in footsteps of his predecessor as Minister of External Affairs, but the Labour Party in later years was to claim that he was sacked because of his China views.

In March, 1955, P.G. Connolly asked in Parliament:

> "Was he [Webb] sent to London on account of that [statement]? I know John Foster Dulles and others were not very happy about that statement. Why was Mr Webb railroaded? On account of that statement? It caused repercussions all over the world ..."[51]

J. Mathison was more positive about the reason for Webb's change of occupation.

> "We waited for an endorsement of that statement by the Prime Minister, but no endorsement came, and the Honourable Mr Webb has disappeared from the political stage, although he is one of the ablest men the National Party has had. He disappeared largely because he was off-side either with the Prime Minister or that important person in the United States, John Foster Dulles"[52]

Certainly Webb had embarrassed the government by drawing down on it the critical comment of its allies, and it is at least a possibility that he was sacrificed to appease those allies.

At the end of 1954 the United States signed a Mutual Security Treaty with Taiwan, further committing it to a position of hostility towards the People's Republic. New Zealand's new Minister of External

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[51] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 305, p96, 24 March, 1955

[52] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 305, p107, 24 March, 1955

Affairs, T.L. Macdonald, moved to associate New Zealand publicly with this American action, saying that Formosa and the Pescadores Islands were of special significance to the security of the Pacific and South-east Asia, and that developments there must affect the security of New Zealand.[53]

Although three months earlier Webb had expressed a New Zealand doubt about the morality of removing Nationalist China from the United Nations, there had been no previous suggestion that New Zealand's interests were bound up in the security and survival of the Nationalist regime on Formosa. Macdonald stated that the island's special significance derived from its strategic position. The Minster's reference to Formosa's link with the security of South-east Asia was based on the knowledge that in the Second World War Japan's control of the island had enabled her to invade the Philippines and thence Indonesia.[54] Because New Zealand was concerned about hostile Great Power control of South-east Asia, the government did not want that hostile power in control of Formosa. The merits or demerits of the Nationalist government were now irrelevant.

New Zealand's commitment to Formosa did not extend to the Nationalist-controlled Off-shore islands, as Macdonald made very explicit in early 1955. When hostilities between the Nationalists and Communists broke out over these islands in February, Macdonald said that a clear distinction had to be made between Formosa on the one hand and the islands adjacent to the Chinese coast on the other.

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[53] *E.A.R.* December, 1954, p2

[54] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 305, p57, 29 March, 1955

The Off-shore islands, the Minister declared bluntly, were Chinese territory.[55] In taking this stand, Macdonald stepped beyond the American position, but was in company with both the British and Australian attitudes. The United States regarded both Formosa and the Off-shore islands as Chinese territory, with the Nationalists the legitimate occupiers thereof. The New Zealand government saw only the Off-shore islands as Chinese territory, and regarded the Chinese Communists as the legitimate occupiers. Macdonald declared that Formosa and the Pescadores were in a different category. "They certainly could not be regarded as integral parts of the Chinese mainland, since although Japan had renounced sovereignty over these territories.. no final disposition of them had yet been made". Macdonald chose to ignore the Cairo declaration, and the fact that Taiwan had been in Chinese hands - unchallenged - since 1945. New Zealand, the Minister said, did not agree with the Communist demand that these islands, which were of considerable significance to the security of the whole Pacific area, should be handed over to the Peking authorities.[56]

The Prime Minister reiterated this view a month later in the House of Representatives, saying: "One thing is certain, in our view, Formosa must remain with the Western powers for some years to come".[57] He said that the question of making Formosa a neutralised or trusteeship country was being studied.

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[55] *E.A.R.* January-February, 1955, p10

[56] Ibid.

[57] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 305, p15, 24 March, 1955

New Zealand's hostility to Communist China and its perception of a threat from that country to South-east Asia, had led the government to deny that Taiwan was Chinese territory and that the People's Republic had any legitimate claim to it. The government's concern for Taiwan was mainly strategic, and not as yet related to any brief for the Nationalist government. Indeed, in denying that Taiwan was Chinese territory and speaking of trusteeship, the government showed that it rejected the Nationalist government's claims to be the legitimate government of China, unlike the Americans, and it also rejected the Nationalists as the proper government of Formosa. New Zealand accepted the right of the Communist Chinese government to take over the Off-shore islands as the de facto rulers of China. While continuing to recognise the Nationalist government, the New Zealand government thought of it as the temporary government of Formosa, not the legal government of China.

It was not until the Foreign Affairs debate in the autumn of 1955 that the Prime Minister finally commented on the question of China's admission to the United Nations, which had been such a controversial topic in the previous session. Holland admitted that there were "many thinking people competent to express a judgement" who held the view that it was not realistic to have the mainland of China represented in the United Nations by the Nationalist Chinese in Formosa: ".. And I suppose it is not, for that matter". However, the Prime Minister claimed, there was no possible chance of Communist China's being admitted to the United Nations in existing circumstances because the veto would be exercised against it. In fact, Holland was technically wrong, because the question of a change in representation of a state already a member of the United Nations was not subject to a

veto, but it made little difference to the substance of his point, which was that advocates of change were wasting their time because New Zealand would be out on a limb. New Zealand could not, in Holland's eyes, combat the influence of a Great Power. More seriously, these futile expressions of intent were likely to damage New Zealand in her ally's eyes to no purpose.

> "All I would say to anyone studying the problem is that the greatest care should be taken to ensure that we do not take any action that will upset our American allies".[58]

Holland did not believe in standing on principle to no purpose - a far cry from the attitude of the first Labour government, although Holland and his government were not enthusiastic for this particular cause. Even less did he intend the government to stand on principle to the detriment of the country's interests - the preservation of the American alliance.

> "It does not matter if we all agree on the admission of Communist China to the United Nations, it will not happen because of the veto. Therefore, I do not think we should jeopardise our friendship with America for the satisfaction, if there is any, of having a debate as to whether or not China shall be admitted".

The Prime Minister went on: "I should like at this point, to emphasise what I am saying, to quote a statement by Sir Winston Churchill:

> 'The Western world must never forget for an instant it lives in security only because the United States provides it with a defensive shield'".

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[58] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 305, p16, 24 March, 1955

In other words, a small country dependent on another for security must not kick against the policy pricks the mentor power might choose to administer. New Zealand's priorities were a function of its size; it must keep its alliance with the United States, come what may. It could not afford the luxury of an independent policy in a dangerous world. New Zealand's lot in the scheme of things was supportive, not that of an equal partner. The Prime Minister still saw the American alliance as a fragile thing which had to be nurtured.

For other party members, too, New Zealand's need to stay close under the wing of the United States was the governing factor in determining China policy, and they struck out angrily at what they saw as the Opposition's neglect of this fundamental. On April 20, backbencher R.G. Gerard declared:

> "I want to know where the Labour Party stands. Are many going to follow the member for Otahuhu [J.M. Deas], who indicated that he thought we should cut our bonds with America more or less and that we should embrace Red China?"[59]

To this National Party member the issue was reduced to its simplest, black-and-white terms. It was a choice between fealty to the United States, and appeasement of China, and in his eyes that was no choice at all. It was not sensible to offend the country's most powerful friend to make a gesture towards the most obvious potential enemy. Gerard seemed convinced that any move towards China signalled an irreversible break with the United States.

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[59] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 305, p472, April 20, 1955

> "We all want to know whether the Labour Party is going to advocate cutting the painter with the United States, which has done a grand job for peace in the world. None of us agrees with everything the United States does ... [but] America is the greatest factor, barring the British Empire, for peace in the world at the present time, and it is our job to work with her".

Here was reiteration of the Prime Minister's point.

New Zealand's job, as it was perceived, was not to make things more awkward for the United States, but more easy. In Gerard's eyes, standing up for China was a deliberate slap in the face of the United States: there could be no compatability between the two. "I want to know whether the Labour Party is going to turn to Red China instead of America".[60] Top priority should be given to maintaining the unity of the alliance.

Apart from the effects that diplomatic recognition would have on the American alliance, the main concern of the policy-makers in the recognition issue was for the effect that recognition could have on the security of South-east Asia. Greater international acceptance of China could both encourage Communist insurgents in South-east Asia and undermine the confidence of governments resisting them in Western intentions of helping them. The New Zealand government not only would not recognise China outside of a movement by the Americans in that direction, but it did not think that the United States should move that way anyway. E.H. Halstead, by then a Minister, said in the House of Representatives in 1955 that recognition of Communist

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[60] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 305, p473, 20 April, 1955

China could present a threat to the retention of Malaya in Western hands.

> "Every move is watched by the people of Asia, and every withdrawal is an encouragement to subversive elements in Malaya and Indo-China ... If an offer were made to Communist China of membership in the United Nations, our difficulties in Malaya would be considerably intensified".[61]

New Zealand had committed itself to providing troops for Malaya in March, 1955, and was thus to be directly involved in containing Communist guerillas of Chinese origin. The Overseas Chinese factor simultaneously seemed to assume more importance in the recognition question. A policy of maximum support for the government on Formosa (Taiwan) was becoming more attractive in National Party eyes as a supposed means of keeping millions of potential insurgents quiescent. While the Formosa government existed as an alternative focus for Overseas Chinese loyalties, the influence of the Communist regime was lessened, and along with it, the influence of its indigenous supporters.

The Minister of External Affairs said in the House:

> "... there are large populations of Chinese in all the other countries of the South-east Asian area .... the basic loyalty of the bulk of those Chinese millions is towards Formosa today. Where would they look to if Formosa went to the Communists? Because of ties of birth and blood many of these people would probably look to Communist China, and then there would be created in South-east Asia many more channels for subversion than exist at the present time".[62]

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[61] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 305, p109, 29 March, 1955

[62] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 305, p56, 24 March, 1955

T.P. Shand, the Postmaster-General, emphasised the point even more strongly.

> "We should stop thinking of Chiang Kai-shek as the defeated head of a government against which many charges of corruption have been brought. Whatever crimes his government have committed, he is the symbol of free China to millions of Chinese people throughout the world. There are Chinese people right throughout South-east Asia. Half the people in Malaya are Chinese. In Indonesia nearly all the leaders of the population - not the political leaders, but the traders, those who make the wheels of industry go round - are Chinese. And the vast majority of Chinese outside China are loyal to free China. Destroy Chiang Kai-shek and you destroy free China. Destroy the belief in Chiang Kai-shek and you destroy the belief by all the Chinese people of the world that there could be any China other than Communist China. Destroy that belief and you might as well walk out of Malaya and Indonesia and the whole of South-east Asia ... so we must understand that it is essential to our cause that we should maintain the position of Chiang Kai-shek, but until recently only the Americans have realised the urgency of it. What they are doing is not really a matter of American prestige; it is to maintain the prestige of a man who, whatever his faults, and the faults of his regime, has been a loyal ally of the democracies in recent years. If we destroy him or allow him to be destroyed, we drive the Chinese of the world into the Communist camp". [63]

National Party backbencher C.H. Harker argued against recognition and admittance on the grounds of their effect on the morale of the existing pro-Western governments in Asia.

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[63] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 305, p83, 30 March 1955

> "... the effect on the other Asian nations could only be deplorable. It would be regarded there as such a triumph for China ... smaller Asian nations who still, for religious and political reasons, are opposed to Communism would feel they had been betrayed by the West and that they might as well give in before they were slaughtered".[64]

Harker quoted the Australian diplomat and lecturer W.G. Goddard[65] to the effect that it was certain that

> "any recognition of Communist China in place of the democracy of Free China could only be interpreted throughout East Asia as a denial on our part of the very thing we have in common with others in the free world, so often declared. The non-Communist countries of Asia would condemn us for our hypocrisy".

The desire to 'keep faith' with the non-Communist countries of Asia had been one of the strong arguments put forward against recognition by Doidge in 1950. The fact that New Zealand since then had become allied with two South-east Asian nations - Thailand and the Philippines - in an anti-Communist alliance could only have strengthened this constraint. Harker, however, was thinking of Japan.

> "For its own purposes, the Communist government in China is angling at the present time to draw Japan into the Communist net, to make her a partner to Communism".

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[64] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 305, p125, 29 March, 1955

[65] W.G. Goddard was born in Newcastle, N.S.W. Lectured in Chinese universities before the Second World War. Joined the Australian Department of External Affairs during the war, retiring in 1955. Acknowledged authority on Formosa. Addressed New Zealand Joint Chiefs of Staff on the subject in the fifties. Author (1966) of "Formosa, a Study in Chinese History", Michigan State University Press.

The spectre of a Communist Japan was one that struck New Zealanders more forcibly than a Communist South-east Asia, for Japan had the proven ability to threaten the country. The Minister of External Affairs saw the retention of a non-Communist Formosa partly in terms of Japan. "The loss of Formosa would seriously affect the position of Japan ... I emphasise again that if Japan turns to Communism and forsakes the Western powers, the problems of the Pacific will be many times greater than any Pacific problem that ever existed".[66] If Japan felt threatened by Chinese Communist occupation of Formosa, its government might very well feel the need to move to a more neutral Cold War position as an accommodation to Chinese views.

Alternatively, the act of recognition could help strengthen the electoral position of the Japanese Communist Party. Thus, the effect of China policy on Japan was as an important consideration as its effect on South-east Asian nations.

As for the admission of Communist China to the United Nations, Harker said he not only opposed it as long as China continued to be an aggressor country, but until China had given proof "for at least the same period it has been an aggressor" that its professions of non-aggression were being honoured. This meant another five years.

Although Clifton Webb had left the House of Representatives, the torch of a liberal China policy in the National Party had been picked up by a backbencher, D.M. Rae. Unlike Webb and his sometime supporter Algie, though, Rae was not so much concerned with China's admission to the United Nations as with its recognition diplomatically.

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[66] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 305, p57, 29 March, 1955

While admitting that the act of recognition "might have repercussions that I do not understand", Rae said that it would be "realistic to recognise Chou En-lai's government as the de facto ruler of China". Dismissing the old bogey of the 1950 dilemma, he declared that recognition "would not necessarily mean we approve of them, but that we held them responsible for what they did. That is the meaning of recognition".[67]

When asked to comment on Rae's views two months later, the Prime Minister made it clear that the ball of improved relations with China was very definitely in China's court.

> "The first step in the allied subjects of recognition of the Chinese Communist government and her admission to the United Nations lies with that government itself",

Holland declared. The first step that the Chinese government had to take was the "provision of concrete evidence" that it was

> "genuinely prepared to seek adjustment by peaceful means of international disputes in which it may be involved. Communist China must give proof by its actions that it is willing to fulfil the duties and obligations of membership in the international community. Foremost amongst these obligations are the requirements that members shall settle their international disputes by peaceful means and that they shall refrain from the threat or use of force".[68]

In his reference to peaceful means of settling international disputes, the Prime Minister was probably referring to the recently passed Formosa Straits crisis. New Zealand's stand against any initiatives towards China at the height of the Bandung era contrasted

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[67] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 305, p74, 29 March, 1955

[68] *E.A.R.* June, 1955, p12

with the attitude of her Commonwealth ally, Canada, which seemed inclined to Webb's views. Only two months after Holland's statement demanding proof of China's sincerity, Canada's Secretary of State for External Affairs, L.B. Pearson, said:

> "We would ... be unwise ... to get into the position where we would seem to be demanding positive proof of utter purity from this or any other regime before we could consider giving it formal diplomatic recognition .."[69]

The Secretary thought also with Webb that the exigencies of the international situation demanded that China be recognised.

> "We should also remember that in present circumstances and in all important negotiations concerning the situation in the Far East we have already recognized that the Government .. has to be present and participate if any agreed solutions are to be reached .... Furthermore, it is becoming clearer that if the United Nations is to play the part it should in the solution of certain Far Eastern problems, the *de facto* government of China has to be present in its discussion of these problems".

Pearson went on:

> "I mention these matters, not to indicate that we are rushing into - or should rush into - any change of policy in this matter of diplomatic recognition, in a way that would cause bitter controversy at home and with certain friendly nations. I am suggesting, however, that the time is coming - and soon - when we should have another and searching look at the problem; that we should consider it also with those friendly governments with whom we like to act, and whenever possible should act together on matters of international importance".

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[69] *E.A.R.* August, 1955, p15

Pearson was saying that logic dictated dealing with China, but certain hard political facts of life - public opinion at home and the all-pervasive influence of the United States - combined to hold action off. He acknowledged that controversy aroused with the United States over a unilateral recognition would be "bitter", and despite his independent attitude, had ruled out such action.

Holland, on the other hand, was not prepared to admit that China should be dealt with. He much preferred to go along with the moralistic American attitude that China should be isolated from the international community until she mended her ways.

New Zealand's permanent Secretary for External Affairs, A.D. McIntosh, had many talks with Pearson on the recognition issue, and the Canadian told him that Canada was quite prepared to go ahead and recognise but could not see any point in doing so alone.[70] Canada, unlike New Zealand, had made a commitment in principle to unconditional recognition and waited only upon a suitable time to go ahead. It was not until 1958 that New Zealand's attitude, with the change of government, drew abreast of Canada's.

When Parliament resumed in July, 1955, the Prime Minister was questioned by the Opposition on the possibility of a change in China policy as an aid to reducing tension in the Far East. Somewhat surprisingly, Holland was prepared to concede that Chinese admission to the United Nations might have this beneficial effect, but reiterated that New Zealand was not going out on a limb over the matter. The government was content to wait upon developments.

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[70] Interview, Sir Alister McIntosh, 21.2.74

> "There has been no change in the attitude of this government to the admission of Communist China to the United Nations, but I think I am entitled to say that the day when it will be admitted is coming closer. I would not be at all surprised if it did not come about much sooner than at present seems possible".

While Holland believed that admission would be "one of the factors contributing to the lessening of tension in the world", he warned "we have to realise that we must not create bigger problems than already exist by something we might do in an effort to solve the original problems".[71] In other words, it was not progress to cause tension between the United States and her allies in order to try and reduce East-West tensions generally.

The Prime Minister said that under existing conditions it was quite out of the question for China to be admitted, and he thought that it would be a pity to raise the issue just then.

> "Before we can hope for an agreement on the admission to the United Nations of Communist China, I think there has to be a lapse of time and an indication of good behaviour .. I hope the day will be hastened when China and other countries, prepared to abide by the rules of the United Nations, will be admitted".

The Prime Minister saw the China problem as one that would be solved in the fullness of time, a time that would allow both China and the United States to modify their attitudes.

That a purely pragmatic approach to foreign policy - an approach that subordinated all issues to the need of the alliance - dominated the Prime Minister's approach to the China issue was

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[71] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 306, p1062, 21 July, 1955

revealed in the next year, 1956. Coming to the question of China and Formosa in his foreign policy debate in August, Holland said:

> "Here I must urge to the utmost of my capacity that members of the House ... exercise considerable caution about what they say about that area. We must work together to the common end. It is well-known that there is the widest difference among friends in the Pacific area. It is of the utmost importance, especially at this time, not to cause difficulty for our friends merely for the purpose of playing to the gallery in other directions. I am speaking of course, of the United States of America".[72]

The next day the Prime Minister extrapolated the point.

> "The United States does not expect us to follow her slavishly, and I do not think we do, either, but I do think we should have a proper appreciation of what the United States means to the whole world - to the British Empire and Commonwealth and the world at large - at this time especially. The United States is making a contribution that entitles her to enjoy ... the respect of all right-thinking paople in this country".[73]

The Prime Minister was making a case for small nation deference to the locus of power. He who carried the burden was entitled to call the tune - substantially, at any rate. Holland went on to criticise the Labour Party for descending to the depths of party politics in discussing a matter of great international importance. They knew there could be no result from their policy and therefore, in his view, were just scoring political points.

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[72] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 309, p889, 7 August, 1956

[73] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 309, p963, 8 August, 1956

D.M. Rae backed up his leader by saying that it was "important and vital to the peace of the world that we should not unwittingly or perhaps brazenly, endanger the friendship of the United States of America".[74]

In Australia, Prime Minister Menzies had often spelt out the rationale for Holland's outlook. He had said that one did not argue in public with one's "great and powerful friends", in the hearing of one's enemies and those who might become so. Any differences with the United States government should be argued out in private.[75] This need for circumspection was an inevitable consequence of a dependent relationship. "True, Australia is an independent nation and has a perfect right to express its views whatever the result", he said in 1958. "This is a grand conception and would be even more admirable if we possessed such population and strength as made us a truly great power, able to defend ourselves in our own right. But the fact is that we are not truly independent, except in legal terms".[76]

The New Zealand Minister for Defence and External Affairs, Macdonald, had stated in the course of the 1955 International Affairs debate that it was "plain that there were two essentials to peace in a world that is plagued with Communist imperialism. The first essential is that there should be unity, above all between the United Kingdom and the United States of America, and then between the other freedom-loving countries of the world".[77]

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[74] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 309, p943, 8 August, 1956

[75] Miller, J.D.B. *'Britain and the Old Dominions'* p195

[76] Ibid., p196

[77] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 305, p58, 24 March, 1955

This passion for unity was expressed at the Commonwealth Prime Minister's Conference in London in April, 1956 where one day was spent in intensive discussions of future Commonwealth relations with China, and no agreement was reached.

This was revealed by the final communique, which made no mention of China. Although Nehru stressed the importance of doing everything possible to improve relations between China and the United Nations, Australia and New Zealand had been strongly against the Commonwealth lining up against known United States policy. Rationalising the policy of deference that Holland was to articulate in the House in July, Australian Prime Minister Menzies said: "One of the great objects of the Cold War is to drive wedges between us and the United States. The United States must not be left alone in this conflict of opinion".[78] In Menzies' view, the China issue was not important enough to the Commonwealth countries to differ publicly from the United States on it. It was, however, very important to the Americans, and they should not have to assume a position in isolation. Holland at the Conference took much the same line. He told the delegates that good relations between the Commonwealth and the United States were so important that there could be no question of adopting a Commonwealth policy that would cause friction with the Americans.[79]

Assessments made in the Department of External Affairs in June, 1956, conceded that the reality of Communist China's influence in Asia was increasingly difficult to ignore. At the same time it was appreciated that the American President had said that there would be no

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[78] *O.D.T.* July, 11, 1956, p5

[79] Information supplied by the Research Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

change in American policy before the November, 1956 elections, and that any move by New Zealand on either admission or recognition before those elections would not be understood by the United States and would weaken the Western alliance against Communism. The official recommendation was that New Zealand should move in co-operation with Commonwealth members, and in particular with Canada and Australia.[80]

Canada's position at this time was much the same as Australia's. Prime Minister St Laurent had warned the Commonwealth Conference that a too hasty effort to force a change of China policy on the United States would meet with such a reaction that the United States might withdraw from the United Nations. For Canada, the possibility of the United Nations existing without the United States was a matter of greater significance than the incongruity of having China represented by the Nationalists. It was a matter of waiting and hoping that the attitude of the administration would not persist indefinitely.[81]

Departmental assessments in New Zealand, while allowing that China's 'Bandung' policy was effectively fulfilling the conditions of good faith that has been demanded for recognition, were to the effect that New Zealand would gain few practical advantages from granting recognition, while suffering the disadvantages of offending the United States and of having to break its links with Taiwan. Moreover, it would be difficult to reconcile the recognition of Communist China with expressed apprehension over subversive activities in Laos.

The 1957 Commonwealth Conference, like the 1956 one, considered the problem of the admittance of Communist China to the United Nations

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[80] Ibid.

[81] Pearson, L.B. *Mike - The Memoirs of the Rt. Hon. Lester B. Pearson*, volume 3, p121.

and once again came out in favour of the status quo with some help from New Zealand. External Affairs Minister Macdonald, reporting to Parliament on the Conference said:

> "There is the opinion that we must recognise and come to terms with Communist China immediately. It is held by this group that it is foolish not to face realities. However, there are some other realities, I feel, that have been overlooked ... What of Formosa? Is that to be abandoned? What of the overseas Chinese who look towards Taiwan at the present time? Are they to be abandoned?"[82]

Lurking behind these, as always, was the biggest constraint of all - the need to preserve the American alliance, which could easily be strained by the basically insubstantial issue of China.

> "Chou En-lai was once quoted, in replying to a question on the recognition of China, as saying that China can wait. That also represented the predominant feeling of our conference in London. It was felt that to press for recognition now would be to incur too high a price, and the price could well be at this stage of affairs a fracturing of Western alliances and could possibly mean a shattering of the framework of the United Nations".[83]

New Zealand had been reminded of the continuing fierce opposition of the United States to any moves towards China less than a month previously. Speaking in San Francisco on June 29, 1957, United States Secretary of State Dulles had asserted yet again that Communist rule in China was a passing phase.

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[82] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 312, p1071, 23 July, 1957

[83] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 312, p1071, 23 July, 1957

Dulles had also declared that China's obtaining of a seat in the United Nations was in the interests of neither the United States nor the United Nations. As for diplomatic recognition, this gave the recognised regime valuable rights and privileges, and recognition by the United States would give the recipient much added prestige at home and abroad. Furthermore, the experience of other nations had convinced him that recognition would not "favourably influence the evolution of affairs in China".[84]

The New Zealand government, even if it had been possessed of a desire to recognise Communist China, believed that it could not afford to ignore such views. Amid what seemed a hostile environment and considering itself virtually defenceless, the government felt acutely the need for American protection. As an unidentified member of the New Zealand Parliament told the editor of the *New Commonwealth*: "if a deluge came again, we would have to shout for the United States. What could Britain do? What did she do before?"[85] This belief in complete dependence on the United States expressed itself in a reluctance to question American policies for fear of being branded a bad ally. The price of security, Nationalist policy-makers believed, was loyalty.

Conclusion

The initial trends of New Zealand's China policy as revealed in the period 1949-1959 were confirmed and strengthened in the years from 1951 to 1957.

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[84] *Department of State Bulletin* vol. 37, July 15, 1957, p95

[85] *O.D.T.* July 2, 1957, p1

The coming of the Korean War in mid-1950 convinced New Zealand's policy-makers that the threat of Communist imperialism was now in the Pacific. The government's immediate reaction was to give all possible support to the major Western power in the Pacific - the only one capable of giving New Zealand protection from any threat. The government wanted to keep the United States committed to the defence of free countries in Asia, and believed that this could only be achieved if New Zealand, as well as the Western world in general, gave full support to American policies designed to achieve this end. It did not matter that others, notably Britain, thought that those policies might not be the most effective ones to achieve the objective: the important thing was not the policy but the support given to it. New Zealand had, in a basic sense, no China policy. The government had an American policy that overrode all. The important thing to be achieved was not China's quiesence but American commitment to the resistance of all threats to the peace in the Pacific. The guarantee of formal support which came with the ANZUS Treaty of 1951 did not relieve New Zealand of her desire to avoid treading on American toes - the government was still concerned to head off latent isolationist tendencies in the United States by proving New Zealand a good ally. Holland made it quite clear in the House in 1955 that no matter what reservations New Zealand might have about the direction of American China policy, the government was not going to take any initiatives that might jeopardise the alliance with the United States. The government's performances at the 1956 and 1957 Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conferences showed that it did not want other Commonwealth members to range themselves against American policy either, less the unity of the free world be shattered.

In its own attitude to China, New Zealand's government generally sympathised with the American moralistic viewpoint rather than the British pragmatic one. The government had no hesitation about supporting the United Nations resolution declaring China an aggressor, and it over-diligently implemented the embargo on strategic materials to China that arose from that resolution. The traditional viewpoint that aggressors must not be appeased, and that membership of the United Nations was a privilege, dominated the government's approach to the question of admission to the United Nations after the Korean War.

Because the government believed that New Zealand's interest was served by the maintenance of non-Communist governments in South-east Asia, it looked at Western policies towards China in the light of the effect they might have on that objective. It was thought that recognition of China would undermine the confidence of Asian states in the willingness of Western powers to support them against pressures from China. It would also damage the position of the Taiwan government in the eyes of the Overseas Chinese, who were a vital factor in the stability of South-east Asia.

In purely global terms, elements in the New Zealand government were persuaded that the British policy towards China was a more realistic one than the American. Recognition and admission of China to the United Nations would, in the British view, make for a lessening of tension in the world, and would perhaps encourage China to take an independent line from the Soviet Union. External Affairs Minister Webb showed between 1951 and 1954 that he favoured this approach, and even Holland in 1955 agreed with it. However, with New Zealand's two closest allies disagreeing with it, there was no hope that it

would be translated into policy.

New Zealand's China policy in the mid-1950s, then, was governed by her loyalty to her chief protector, the traditional propensity not to conciliate perceived aggressors, and her concern for the survival of the non-Communist governments of South-east Asia.

CHAPTER 3

THE LABOUR PARTY AND CHINA 1950-57

Introduction

During its period in opposition from 1949 to 1957, the Labour Party gradually adopted a position on the diplomatic recognition of China distinctly different from that of the National government. The first moves in this direction did not come until the Korean War was underway. From the 1949 election to the outbreak of that war in mid-1950, the Labour Party under the leadership of Peter Fraser was at one with the National Party in its suspicion of the new Chinese government's legitimacy and of its future intentions in Asia, and Labour agreed with the decision of the government not to recognise. Fraser had not been certain that the Nationalist government of China had not been a victim of Russian aggression, and he thought that an early recognition might affect New Zealand's security by strengthening Communist insurgents in South-east Asia. Mid-way through the Korean War, after the anti-Communist atmosphere associated with the 1951 waterfront dispute and general election had dissipated somewhat, the Labour Party became an advocate of the recognition of China. Fraser by this time was dead, and the party was now sure that the Communist revolution in China was a genuine expression of the will of the Chinese people, and that the government was thus entitled to recognition. Beyond an ideological sympathy with a government of the people, however, the party's stand was based on the belief that peace in Asia could only be achieved by an acceptance of the Chinese government. The majority of members of the party thought that recognition should not be granted

while China was involved in military action against the United Nations forces in Korea. After the close of the Korean War in 1953, Labour members could see no impediment to recognition and China's admission to the United Nations. Acceptance of China by the West would be a first step towards easing global tensions. Recognition was included in the party's manifesto for the 1954 elections, but was left out for tactical reasons in 1957. At the same time that they urged recognition, Labour members did not want to see the island of Taiwan transferred to Communist control, although it was recognised as Chinese territory.

After the defeat of the Labour government in late 1949, Labour Party leader Fraser continued his opposition to the recognition of the Chinese Communist government, though not publicly. In September, 1950, the Minister of External Affairs, F.W. Doidge, said of the early days of the National administration: "The government of New Zealand refused recognition of Communist China and I think I am right in saying that in that attitude we were supported by the Leader of the Opposition".[1] Labour members in the House at the time did not deny the claim.

There was no remit concerning China at the annual Labour Party conference in May, 1950. This conference was dominated in its international section by questions of New Zealand's security. Perhaps in an atmosphere of security-consciousness, the claims of China, a country which was thought part of the security problem, did not seem important. It was not until the advent of the Korean War in June, 1950, that more thought was given to the China recognition question.

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[1] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 291, p2143, 5 September, 1950

The Korean War forced a consideration of China's relationships with the world on the Labour Party. Whereas the effect of the war on the National Party was to confirm it in its opposition to any diplomatic recognition of China, the effect on the Labour Party was the growth of a belief that no peace in the Asian region could be arrived at satisfactorily unless China was internationally accepted.

M. Moohan was the first party member to raise the China issue in Parliament, and he did this in November, 1950. Calling the question of China a matter that required "some attention", Moohan noted that up to that date China had not been allowed to be represented at the United Nations by a proper delegate. China with its huge population could not be ignored, he said. "Whether we like or dislike the Chinese Government, the fact remains there is a Government in charge of the country". Moohan went on to refute the National Party belief that the Chinese Communist government was a creature of the Soviet Union. "I do not subscribe to the view that China, with its history, will ever become like Czechoslovakia and other European countries, a satellite of Soviet Russia".[2]

No other Labour member mentioned the issue at that time. In December, 1950, Fraser, who had been firmly against recognition, died. He was succeeded by Walter Nash, whose views on the subject are not a matter of public record, although in 1949 he had associated himself with Fraser's unwillingness to recognise China before the general election.

At the party conference in June, 1951, a remit was presented that called for the "people's Government of China" to be recognised.

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[2] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 292, p3960, 2 November, 1950

The External Affairs Committee of the conference recommended that the party "support the recognition of the Chinese People's government and its admission to the United Nations as soon as hostilities cease in Korea".[3] It also asked the party to endorse a decision that the People's government representatives in the United Nations should replace those appointed by Chiang Kai-shek's administration. A.M. Finlay, who had been a Labour Member of Parliament from 1946 to 1949, moved that the words "as soon as hostilities cease in Korea" be deleted from the clause. This was lost.[4] The party was not prepared to endorse recognition while Chinese forces were in action against the United Nations in Korea - which included New Zealand. China had only recently been formally condemned by the United Nations as an aggressor and had had sanctions imposed upon her.

The lack of enthusiasm for doing anything about China's position in the "hot" phase of the Korean War was reflected in the fact that a recognition plank was not included in the policy platform for the snap election of September, 1951. The non-inclusion was probably also a matter of tactics, since the election was fought around the issue of Communist influence in the Unions, and, as in 1949, a Labour Party appearing to be carrying a brief for a Communist government would have been at a disadvantage. At the election, the party went down to a further, heavier defeat.

In the parliamentary session immediately after the election, several Labour members brought up the China question. A.H. Nordmeyer, a former Minister of Health and Industries and Commerce who was currently

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[3] N.Z. Labour Party, *Report of the 35th Annual Conference*, p26

[4] Ibid. p27

President of the Labour Party, reaffirmed that China could not be recognised while fighting continued in Korea, but that New Zealand would have to get around to it sooner or later. Nordmeyer seemed to see recognition of China as a rather unfortunate practical necessity. He did not find any virtues in such a policy.

> "... whatever we may think of Communism in general, or whatever we may think of the particular brand of Communism that exists in China today, it does seem to me that sooner or later we shall have to recognise *de facto* the government of China. I agree that the present time is not the proper time to do so - that it would be unthinkable to do so while China, overtly or otherwise, is engaged in hostilities in Korea against the forces of the United Nations. However, when that Korean episode comes to an end ... I think the House will agree with the statement expressed by the Minister of External Affairs when he was reported some months ago as saying he regarded it as inevitable that the Chinese government should be recognised".[5]

A backbencher, H.E. Combs, expressed much more concern for China's rights. He condemned the fact that New Zealand had refused to recognise China, even though the four hundred million people of China had a stake in the world as much as anyone else.

As for admission to the United Nations, Combs made the point that there were already several governments represented there that were Communist, so there was no reason to exclude China for that fact. Combs saw the Communist takeover in China as a completely domestic revolution, and not as the result of a Soviet effort.

> "When they finished up the war they cleaned up their own country and drove out their individualistic government. Now because we did not like them driving it out we say 'we will not talk to you anymore or recognise you'".[6]

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[5] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 295, p274, 11 October, 1951

[6] Ibid. p281

W.T. Anderton declared that it was known to members that the current government in China had relieved China of a dictatorship from which she had suffered for many years.[7]

The 1952 conference of the party, held in April, was presented with remits that called for Formosa's return to China to be supported and for China's admission to the United Nations to be supported. The policy committee recommended that both remits be rejected, and that a motion be substituted that linked Chinese membership of the United Nations to the conclusion of hostilities in Korea.[8] The Formosa issue was left in abeyance.

In Parliament that year the party leader, Walter Nash, made his first comments on the China issue. He began by stating that the Chinese under a Communist government were better off than they had been in the pre-Communist period, and he referred to Chiang Kai-shek's government as "the corrupt organisation that formerly ruled".[9] In moral terms, in contrast to National Party members, Nash saw the Communist side as superior because they were more interested in the welfare of the Chinese people. Nash said now that he believed that Britain had been wise in recognising Communist China.

In keeping with the Labour Party's strong fealty to the United Nations and its resolutions, and its opposition to aggression, Nash said that China could on no account be recognised while she was party to aggression. However, as soon as a truce was concluded and

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[7] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 295, p345, 11 October, 1951

[8] N.Z. Labour Party, *Report of the 36th Annual Conference*

[9] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 299, p357, 16 July, 1952

hostilities had ceased, New Zealand should join the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union in advocating China's admission to the United Nations.

No-one could deny that the Communists in China were in effective control of that country, Nash said. "They are, by the will of the people, the proper government ..." The party leader went on to say that the Chinese were more likely to be brought on to the side of the free world by being admitted to the United Nations than they were by being kept out.

Nash saw Formosa's status as a separate issue. He went along with Webb in believing that while the Cairo and Potsdam agreements had given Taiwan over to the Government of China, "other factors" had "come in between" in the meantime. After China had been admitted to the United Nations, the problem of Formosa could be dealt with by that body, Nash thought. He listed three possible solutions that the United Nations could opt for: trusteeship under the United Nations, complete independence, or transfer to the government of mainland China.[10]

The next day in parliament, J. Mathison weighed in with political arguments for the recognition of China, in contrast to the essentially moral and legal arguments of Nash. As a first premise, Mathison argued against the view that China was a satellite of Soviet Russia - an argument that denied the legitimacy of the Chinese Revolution and therefore found no case for recognition.

> "I do not think the Soviet has acquired China. It is true that Chinese Communist leaders have sought advice and assistance from Moscow. That was to be expected, however, because China found a hostile Western world. We in New Zealand have not done very much, but Britain has held out the hand of friendship to Communist China in recognising the government there, and after all, that is the only logical thing to do".[11]

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[10] Ibid. p361

[11] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 297, pp382-83, 17 July, 1952

The Nationalist government on Formosa no longer counted, and New Zealand had to be realistic as well as idealistic.

After acknowledging the party line on delayed admission to the United Nations, Mathison went on to suggest that immediate admission might have beneficial effects: it might cause an estrangement between Russia and China.

> "If we, too, held out the hand of friendship to China, and, if necessary, competed for her friendship, then we might be doing something well worthwhile and to the good of the British Commonwealth and other Western countries ... Let us hold out the hand of friendship to China and I am sure we will reap the benefit".

Other Labour parliamentarians were similarly of the opinion that despite China's aggression, her immediate admission to the United Nations should be favoured in the interests of a speedy settlement in Korea. W.W. Freer was reported to have advocated this at an Auckland Peace Council meeting.[12]

M. Moohan believed that if the West continued its current policy towards China it would simply cement it to the Soviet Union.[13]

Former Attorney-General H.G.R. Mason, however, expressed doubts that the strategy outlined would work in view of Chinese attitudes.

> "The Government of China does not seem anxious to be recognised by any nation .. It was recognised by the British government but it did not ... [send] ambassadors to Britain.. This is a rather peculiar attitude for the Chinese government to take ... certainly it is action .. that quite sets aside any question of another nation recognising the Chinese government".[14]

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[12] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 297, p504, 24 July, 1952

[13] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 297, p388, 17 July, 1952

[14] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 297, p395, 17 July, 1952

By 1953, international conditions were becoming more favourable for recognition. In the House in April, W.T. Anderton said that with the Korean situation settling, it was time that the government pronounced itself definitely in favour of the admission of the People's Republic into the United Nations, so that China might assist in removing the tension and irritability that had been felt for so long through the world.[15]

In July, 1953, an armistice was signed between the United Nations forces and China in Korea. A month later, in the House of Representatives, Nash called for early diplomatic recognition for China. "We could not give recognition whilst China was an aggressor, but we should give her early recognition".[16] After this categorical statement, the Leader of the Opposition did acknowledge a possible constraint - the position of Formosa.

> "If the Chinese Communist Government is recognised, then at that point, in accord with treaties, it would take control of Formosa. I would not be too keen on that. I am certain that Chiang Kai-shek should not be in charge of Formosa, but I'm not too sure about handing Formosa over to the Chinese Communist government. I think the Formosans should have some say".

The party leader broached the idea of a United Nations trusteeship over Formosa again, but now doubted that the government of the People's Republic would find it acceptable. Nash did not at any stage mention Formosa's strategic value to the West: he seemed concerned only with the rights of Formosa's population to a voice in their future.

Nash called also for China's assuming its rightful place on the Security Council of the United Nations, and admitted that British

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[15] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 299, p95, 16 April, 1953

[16] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 299, p412, 12 August, 1953

Labour leader Attlee's support for that policy had influenced his own view upon it.

The few Labour members who mentioned the American alliance in connection with China policy did not see it as a constraining factor. H.E. Combs conceded that the United States was hostile to recognition, but said that the time had arrived for New Zealand to assert itself and to say it wanted to be friendly with China and have that country admitted to the United Nations.[17] H.G.R. Mason believed that the existence of the American alliance should be a reason for New Zealand's doing something positive about the isolation of China. New Zealand, he said, had to be concerned about situations that might activate the provisions of the alliance, such as a war between China and the United States. The status of the Chinese government was important because the question of peace was largely related to it. "... China could be concerned with events that could lead to a war, which ... would involve us... anything that increases the chance of war is of concern to us because of that relationship into which we have entered".[18]

Other Labour speakers too were concerned about the need to avoid confrontation between East and West. Mathison declared that China could not be kept out of the Security Council and "the sooner we permit her to be on the Security Council the better it will be for relationships between the East and West".[19] W.T. Anderton expressed disappointment that "neither the Minister nor any government member who has spoken was prepared to advocate the admittance of China to the United Nations ... It is wrong to keep out a nation which is a Power in the world today and which we must admit is going to be a greater

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[17] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 299, p421, 12 August, 1953

[18] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 299, p435, 13 August, 1953

[19] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 299, p441, 13 August, 1953

Power in the world than it has ever been".[20] A.H. Nordmeyer followed up with the declaration that the time had arrived, and indeed was past, when the fact of Communist government in China had to be accepted, however unpalatable that might be.[21]

The Opposition became more ardent champions of China in the 1954 session of Parliament. The Geneva Conference on Korea and Indo-China had opened in May, and China was present at the negotiations. The government was the first party to broach the issue with Webb's notable July 6 speech. The Labour Party followed his lead eagerly. Nash said: "I agree entirely that China should be admitted to the United Nations early. There should be no qualification now that armistice principles are operative in Korea".[22] Nash appeared to have been greatly impressed by manifestations of a new conciliatory spirit in China's international relations. He was eager to believe in Chou En-lai's sincerity and for the West to respond to the new Chinese attitude.

After a survey of the international scene, the Leader of the Opposition confessed to seeing "one ray of light", and that came from Chou En-lai. Nash referred to the treaty concluded between China and India some weeks previously, which had enunciated the so-called Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence. Nash cited them to the House, presumably as evidence of China's good intentions. The Leader of the Opposition then quoted Chou as saying that big nations and small could peacefully co-exist on the basis of the five principles.[23]

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[20] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 299, p460, 13 August, 1953

[21] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 299, p466, 13 August, 1953

[22] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 303, p219, 6 July, 1954

[23] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 303, p214 and pp217-218, 6 July, 1954

Nash seemingly dismissed Formosa as a constraint on recognition of the People's Republic. "The administration allegedly operating as the government of the Chinese people from Formosa has no relation to or jurisdiction over the people of China". There was no thought of a two-China policy at all. Nash wanted Formosa taken over by the United Nations, and the United Nations to determine whether the Formosans should be ruled by Chiang Kai-shek or not.

At least one prominent Labour member, Mathison, was inclined to disagree with Nash's dismissal of the Nationalist Chinese government on Formosa.

> "From the information supplied to us by 'Free' China it appears to me that the government there has done a remarkably good job. There is testimony that the Formosans are probably better looked after today than at any time in their history. I believe there is room for both governments. Formosa could constitute an entirely separate country and could seek individual representation in the United Nations".[24]

Mathison's major point, however, was a reiteration that recognition of the People's Republic was necessary to divorce China from the Soviet Union.

> "Our continued refusal to recognise facts as they are .. is inevitably persuading China to go closer and closer to Russia, which is at the present time giving very great technical assistance in the effort to industrialise China and lift up the standard of living of her people".

When Defence Minister Macdonald challenged the assumption that recognition would make China friendlier to the West, by quoting the example of Britain's poor relations with China, the Labour member had a ready answer.

> "I can understand China's reaction to the persistent refusal to recognise her in the United Nations. I think we would react in exactly the same way ... I believe China could be persuaded to play a much more important part alongside the Western nations if we would only use our endeavours to have

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[24] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 303, p228, 6 July, 1954

> her included in the United Nations and brought away from the Soviet bloc, to which she is obviously attached, not because of cultural relationships, but purely because of political and economic relationships. I believe those relationships can be broken any time".[25]

A.H. Nordmeyer did not think that the attitude of the United States should be any constraint on New Zealand's acting on the matter of China's admission to the United Nations.

> "It is ... a matter to be deplored that certain influential opinion in the United States has indicated that, if the admission of China to the United Nations does in fact take place, a strong move will be made to induce the United States to depart from the United Nations. I think that would be a very undesirable and regrettable state of affairs, but on the other hand, I do not think a threat of that kind should induce any government that felt it was the right thing to admit Communist China to the United Nations to refrain from taking the action that seemed right".[26]

Mason, too, attacked deference to American views. He conceded that "we have to recognise .. that with China there are great emotional difficulties in America", but he saw American China policy as unrealistic and counter-productive.

> "... it is difficult to accommodate ourselves to a position that offers no hope for the future ... it does not lead us to any result. Are we to go on till the crack of doom with two parties always antagonistic? ... That attitude has no aim and consequently cannot secure the sympathy of other peoples for very long".

While it would probably have done little good recognising China previously because of its attitude, Mason said,

> "the Attorney-General [Webb] ... has said that the representative of China [at the Geneva Conference] is in a conciliatory mood and wants to try to come to some understanding. With that, I believe the affair takes on an entirely different complexion ... When we have that desire to co-operate ... then we must do something to reciprocate .. China is certainly a great nation. It is impossible to discuss Asian affairs without reference to the Chinese".[27]

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[25] Ibid.

[26] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 303, p261, 7 July, 1954

[27] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 303, p257, 7 July, 1954

Nordmeyer supported Mathison's view that China should be recognised so that the Soviet Union's influence over China could be reduced. The example of Yugoslavia, Nordmeyer believed, held out the hope that the strategy might work.

> ".. in spite of the fact that the country as a whole has embraced a Communist form of government, it has seen fit to break with Russia... Although Communism may be, and probably is, very well established in China, it does not necessarily follow that China and Russia will, for military purposes at any rate, be regarded as one. If China can be wooed away from Russia, then that will be to the advantage of the free world".

Not all in the Labour Party took a hopeful view of the benefits of coming to terms with China. P.G. Connolly disagreed with his colleagues on both the possibility of separating China and the Soviet Union, and on the practicality of ignoring American opinion.

> "It appears to me that it is now impossible to drive a wedge between those two nations, for they have mutual non-aggression pacts, .. and the leaders of China today ... have been devout Communists for more than thirty years... There are very strong ties between those two countries, and I believe they are being consolidated day by day. I cannot see how the action proposed by the Minister [Webb] can be put into effect".[28]

As for American opinion, Connolly believed that attention had to be paid to the consequences of ignoring it.

> "The mere fact of saying that consideration is being given to China's admission is, I think, of minor importance compared to the reaction of other nations, and especially of the United States".

Connolly evidently went along with the National Party members in believing that New Zealand could not make a decision in isolation oblivious of its long-term effects in other, more important, policy areas. Whereas Nordmeyer put principle first, Connolly thought the practical effect of a potential New Zealand action was much more important. He wanted to know how the government was going to deal

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[28] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 303, p281, 8 July, 1954

with the inevitable American reaction. Connolly also wanted to know if the Minister was proposing a definite policy change by New Zealand or not.

The Deputy-leader of the Party, C.E. Skinner, spoke up in favour of recognition as a practical way of helping to solve "the many complicated problems with which international affairs in the East are surrounded".[29]

Speaking in September on the China issue, Nash agreed with Mathison and Nordmeyer in believing that the cultivation of China could deprive the Soviet Union of pernicious influence over that country. The party leader then went on to say that he thought that one of the West's major difficulties was caused by the fact that China was outside the United Nations.

> "What the qualifications should be for her to come into the United Nations I am not concerned about for the moment, but the sooner we get her in the better it will be. In a world of 2,400 million people, you cannot keep a nation of 600 million out of the United Nations and expect to get the results you want to achieve. We on this side of the House support in general the policy of the United Kingdom government".[30]

In September, 1954, British Labour leader Attlee visited New Zealand after a widely-publicised tour of China. Attlee was a firm advocate of recognition. At a press conference held after a State luncheon given by Prime Minister Holland and the Cabinet, Attlee claimed that the British Labour Party mission to Russia and China had eased tension between East and West. It could be further relieved by recognition of the Peking regime, he said, but he could not say whether the United States would accept it. "To think that you can have no dealings with Communists is a totalitarian suggestion".[31]

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29 *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 303, p296, 8 July, 1954

30 *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 304, p2107, 30 September, 1954

31 *Waikato Times* September 15, 1954, p6 (*N.Z.P.A. - Wgtn*)

The month after Attlee's visit, the Labour Party released its election manifesto for 1954. It was revealed that party policy was "to press for the admission to the United Nations of all established sovereign governments" as well as to "support the recognition of the de facto Chinese government".[32]

The party's policy committee had decided that a positive attitude towards China would not be received unfavourably by the electorate in the more relaxed international atmosphere that followed the successful conclusion of the Geneva Conference on Indo-China. The mood towards China had mellowed to such an extent that Labourites felt that they could advance the cause of recognition without the danger of being tarred by the pro-Communist brush.[33]

Significantly for its later policy in government, the party promised only to "press" for China's admission to the United Nations, not to vote for it. Similarly, there was no firm declaration of intent to recognise China diplomatically, only a pledge to support recognition. The Labour Party's policy in 1972 was to be much more definite. The 1954 platform did not promise New Zealand initiatives outside an alliance context: it pledged advocacy of a cause.

In the general election of November, 1954, the Labour Party failed to regain power, but it recovered the parliamentary strength it had lost in 1951.

The end of 1954 and beginning of 1955 saw Communist China "spoil" the Geneva atmosphere by launching an attack on the Nationalist-held Off-shore islands in the Taiwan Strait. Despite this development, and

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[32] *O.D.T.* October 20, 1954, p1

[33] Bruce Brown, Private Secretary to Nash, Interview, 24.1.75

possibly because of it, Labour Parliamentarians continued to press China's case for international recognition strongly in the 1955 session of Parliament.

Opposition leader Nash restated his plea that China should be admitted to the United Nations.

> "The Prime Minister admits that one body is in charge of the mainland of China. It is farcical to imagine that Chiang Kai-shek is representing China at the United Nations. He is not. Out of the 600,000,000 Chinese, 8,000,000 or 9,000,000 in Formosa are taking the part of China in the United Nations. That is not fair. It does not make sense".[34]

As for Formosa, Nash reaffirmed that it was historically part of China, but that circumstances were such that "the question of occupancy by the Communist section is wrong and will do harm". The logical thing to do would be to follow the advice of Pearson of Canada: neutralise Formosa completely and ensure that Chiang Kai-shek's forces were protected, and ultimately give the Formosans some chance to say what they wanted to do with regard to their own island.

Nash had noted in his preparation for the International Affairs debate that while there would be no easy solutions to the problems posed by Communist China's presence in Asia, there were steps that could be taken to help, and the first among these was the recognition of China and her admission to the United Nations Organisation. This, he wrote, would do much to relieve tensions by reducing Chinese truculence as well as by recognising reality. Facing realities and dealing with them was not appeasement, but practical statesmanship.[35]

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[34] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 305, pp36-37, 24 March, 1955

[35] Nash Papers, Bundle 132

Deputy-leader Skinner also saw the cause of peace in the Far East as the pressing reason for the recognition of China.

> "When I was in Korea ... we spoke to people who had spent practically all their lives in the Far East... They were sure there would be no peace in the Far East until the Communist government was recognised".[36]

When National's E.H. Halstead objected that Skinner's visit to Korea had been two years previously, when the Korean War was still on, Skinner said that he felt even more strongly at the current moment that there was no chance of a lasting peace until the Chinese government was included in the United Nations. China should have been recognised in 1953, he said, when it would have had more effect, but it was not too late now.

P.G. Connolly, perhaps surprisingly in view of his attitude the previous year, followed up the point. "Most thinking people would agree that admission of Communist China is inevitable, and in my opinion the sooner the better. I think it would relieve a lot of tension that exists today in that area".[37]

Nordmeyer, too, seized the theme: "We on this side of the House believe ... that it is imperative for the peace of the world that the present de facto government of China should be recognised, and that China should be admitted to the United Nations".[38]

Some Labour Party speakers attacked the Prime Minister's determination to avoid jeopardising friendly relations with the United States over the China issue. Mathison's condemnation, however, was not so

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[36] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 305, p60, 29 March, 1955

[37] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 305, p96, 30 March, 1955

[38] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 305, p144, 31 March, 1955

much of New Zealand's taking an independent line as of its following the wrong leader.

"Does this mean in fact that our foreign policy on the admission of China to the United Nations is not governed by the United Kingdom but by the United States of America?".[39] Mathison said that he would be surprised if the United States were offended if New Zealand expressed an opinion that differed publicly from its own. The United States, he claimed, had not been offended by the United Kingdom's disagreements with American policy.

> "Why should we not advocate the admission of China just because a few Americans such as Senator Knowland and Mr Dulles do not like China? Unless America is going to agree to everything we want to do, we cannot do it! Is that the position?"

A new Labour member of Parliament, J.M. Deas, also rebuked the government for following the lead of the United States rather than that of Britain. The question of whose judgement was to be deferred to was apparently almost as important as the substance of the judgement.

> "Have we here in New Zealand .. acted wisely in refusing to recognise the Peking government, in refusing to accept the lead of Britain ...?"[40]

Deas went on to ask whether the Korean War would have occurred if China had been in the United Nations and had been generally accepted by the West. He said that it was not too late for New Zealand to make amends, and that New Zealand should be more concerned about the loss of Chinese goodwill than the loss of American goodwill.

> "... would it not be less dangerous if we took the view that it is better not to offend 500,000,000 Chinese people?

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[39] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 305, p107, 30 March, 1955

[40] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 305, p401, 19 April, 1955

> We are assured of the co-operation and goodwill of the American people, so they tell us, and they have proved it. We have not had the co-operation of the 500,000,000 Chinese people or their government ...".

After Parliament had recessed, it was reported by the press that a Labour member of Parliament, W.W. Freer, who had been travelling abroad since December, had managed to gain entry to China and would be in Peking for May Day. Freer, however, was evidently not an emissary for his party. The Leader of the Opposition expressed surprise at news of the visit.[41]

Freer was one of the younger, more radical members of the parliamentary party. He had advocated the minority view that China should be recognised before the Korean War was over. On his return from China later in the year, Freer told a university political group that there were few signs that China intended infiltrating through Asia. He said:

> "Communism is there to stay; we have to learn to get on with her. Only by doing this can there be a basis of reconciliation between the two ideals, and until we do, we must agree to differ or face the future without hope".[42]

At the thirty-ninth Labour Party Conference in May, 1955, a remit to admit the Chinese People's Republic to the United Nations was again put before the delegates. It included a recommendation that Formosa be returned to Peking. The Policy, Industry, Commerce and Defence Committee readily endorsed the section relating to China's admission to the United Nations, but it rejected the call for the

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[41] *O.D.T.* May 2, 1955, p4

[42] *O.D.T.* October 3, 1955, p8

return of Formosa to Peking. Instead, the Committee recommended that the conference support a new Formosa clause reading "that Formosa be placed under a United Nations Trusteeship for the purpose of determining their future by vote of the people of Formosa".[43] This, of course, was the parliamentary party's rather impractical line, and reflected the influence of moderate Members of Parliament on the Committee.

When Parliament resumed for 1955's second session, the case for China in the United Nations was still being actively pushed by Labour members. Mathison noted with disapproval that American Secretary of State Dulles had moved again that the question of Chinese representation be deferred.

> "We affirm, and we have repeatedly affirmed, that one of the things that would relieve tension in the East more quickly than anything else would be the recognition of Red China. We have always argued that, if we are to have a United Nations Organisation at all, all nations should be in it. We firmly believe that if all nations are represented there will be a far better prospect of maintaining world peace than there would by the definite and deliberate exclusion of some major powers".[44]

Freer agreed that the isolation and containment of China was counter-productive:

> "There can be no assurance of peace, nor can there by any sincere approach to achieving peace, when one-quarter of the world's total population is locked out from the very council which will decide the fate of mankind...
>
> We must learn to co-operate with the Communists. I firmly believe that peaceful co-existence can and must be achieved".[45]

Carr thought that New Zealand would be encouraging "international amity and concord by taking this big step of giving China her rightful

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[43] N.Z.L.P. *Report of the 39th Annual Conference*, p33

[44] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 306, p1062, 21 July, 1955

[45] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 306, p1667, 11 August, 1955

place in the councils of the world".[46]

A new Labour member, P.N. Holloway, condemned National Party members for sitting back and saying that China had to earn its passage back into the community of nations. He said that the negotiations in Indo-China could not have been brought about without the help of the government of Communist China, and that that had been a degree of earning its passage back that the whole world had appreciated. Holloway urged that New Zealand cast off the constraint of American opinion and say what it thought.

> "Some people consider that too much attention is, perhaps, being paid to the views of other nations with whom we are friendly, and that we shall not consider that China has earned her passage back until those nations have said so".[47]

The theme of no subservience to the Americans was reiterated in the 1956 parliamentary session by Mathison, who said that while the concern of the Americans for China's admittance to the United Nations was appreciated, "surely we do not have to follow slavishly everything America does or says. It would be very dangerous if we did".[48] Mathison said that the difficulties associated with China's exclusion, particularly in South-east Asia, were greater than any difficulties associated with her inclusion. Nash in that session said: "It is time we conceded that China is governed by the men approved by the people of China ... we should be recognising the men who are governing China ..".[49]

It was in the 1956 session that a National Member of Parliament raised the question of the propriety of visits to China, in connection

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[46] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 306, p1064, 21 July, 1955

[47] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 306, p1065, 21 July, 1955

[48] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 309, p944, 8 August, 1956

[49] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 309, p894, 7 August, 1956

with a group of New Zealanders who had been invited to go to China in April. Several Labour members made it plain that in their view any contacts between China and New Zealand could only be positive steps towards a general improvement of international relations. Mathison said he thought that Freer's visit to China had been a very good idea, and that he hoped the time would come when the Minister of External Affairs would also visit Peking and try to establish better relationships between China and the SEATO signatories in particular.[50]

F. Kitts said:

> "I think an essential job of any government .. is to develop harmonious relationships with all the nations of the world .. particularly with China and the nations which are in association with Russia ... the greater the exchange of visits between this country and Russia, China, or any other nation, the better .."[51]

Included in the group of New Zealanders visiting Peking that year was university lecturer and former foreign correspondent in China James Bertram, who had spoken with Nash on the China question before he left. Bertram was asked by Chou En-lai when New Zealand would recognise China, and Chou was told that while the current National Party government was opposed to diplomatic recognition, the Labour Party's views were very different. If the Labour Party were to win the coming election, Bertram said, "I think it is possible that New Zealand support for Peking representation in the United Nations, and for direct recognition of the People's government, may follow".[52]

Bertram's opinion of a Labour government's line of action on China

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[50] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 308, p622, 2 May, 1956

[51] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 308, p156, 12 April, 1956

[52] Bertram, J. "*Return to China*", p89

was very guarded. It was only "possible", not "probable", or "certain", that Labour would advocate recognition in office. It may be concluded that Nash was not prepared to give an assurance to the Chinese that China would be recognised by a Labour government. This apparently newly cautious attitude was reflected in the fact that support for the recognition of the People's Republic and for its admission into the United Nations did not appear in the policy manifesto for the 1957 general election. The party went into the election campaign of that year technically uncommitted to recognise China should it win. Theoretically, the fact that recognition was left out of the manifesto meant that this plank was no longer party policy, since in New Zealand, unlike in Australia, the party platform does not include semi-permanent planks of a specific nature.[53]

The Labour Party constitution of the time said: "The policy submitted to the electors in the manifesto shall be the official policy of the party until the next manifesto is issued".[54] Certainly the omission of the China recognition clause was deliberate, rather than an oversight. Bruce Brown, who was Nash's private secretary at the time, recalled in 1975 that the 1957 manifesto deliberately made no mention of China recognition or of support for China's entry into the United Nations.[55] The abandonment of China in the manifesto was, however, a tactical move rather than a reflection of any change in party outlook. Labour thought it had a good chance to win in 1957, but it suspected - correctly, as it turned out - that the election would

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[53] Kelston, R.N. "*The Private Member of Parliament*", p18

[54] New Zealand Labour Party, *Constitution and Rules* as Amended at the 1955 Annual Conference, Wellington, no date, p22

[55] B.M. Brown, Interview, 24.1.75

nevertheless be a cliff-hanger.[56] After the Formosa Straits Crisis of early 1955, and trouble in Tibet in 1956, there were no votes in the China issue, and the party needed all the votes it could get. It believed that it could not afford to put forward any possibly controversial policy planks.[57] The mood of goodwill towards China that had prevailed immediately after the Geneva Conference, and which had spurred the Labour Party's enthusiasm for recognition, had dissipated by 1957. There was hardly any mention of China in the 1957 parliamentary session.

Labour, however, was committed in principle to recognition, and once the party had been elected, it was reasonable to suppose that, all things being equal, it would follow through on its declarations of earlier years.

Conclusion

During the period up to the 1957 election, the Labour Party had gradually adopted a position on the diplomatic recognition of China distinctively different from that of the National government. From the 1949 election to the onset of the Korean War, the Labour Party joined the National government in its suspicion of the new Chinese government's legitimacy and therefore acquiesced in its non-recognition. Fraser, the party leader until December, 1950, was not certain that the National Government of China had not been a victim of Russian aggression. He had also believed that Western recognition could have detrimental indirect effects on New Zealand's security by strengthening Communist insurgents in South-east Asia.

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[56] Ibid.

[57] Brown Interview, 24.1.75

During the Korean War and after the passing of the leadership to Nash, the Labour Party became an advocate of the recognition of China. As Nash's 1952 speech in Parliament showed, the party was now sure that the Communist revolution in China was the legitimate expression of the Chinese people's wishes, and that the government was entitled to recognition and admission to the United Nations. The majority of Labour Party members, and certainly the senior ones, believed, however, that diplomatic recognition could not be granted while China continued to defy the United Nations in Korea. China had been declared an aggressor, and it was thus, in Labour's eyes as in National's, morally incumbent upon members of the United Nations to deny China the privilege of membership until it had ceased violating the Charter. Some Labour members and ex-members advocated immediate recognition as a practical means of ensuring a peace settlement in Korea.

After the Korean War, Labour members could see no impediment to China's admission to the United Nations and urged it as a means of preventing further situations like Korea developing. While National Party members believed that China must expunge its moral guilt, the Labour members adopted the pragmatic attitude that Western contact with China would be more productive than isolating China. The party believed that American disapproval should not prevent New Zealand from advocating what it thought was right. The party did see the fate of the inhabitants of Taiwan as a possible factor in complicating a decision to recognise, however. Labour was not prepared to ignore the Formosans' right to self-determination.

CHAPTER 4

THE SECOND LABOUR GOVERNMENT AND THE PROBLEM OF THE RECOGNITION OF CHINA

Introduction

The Labour Party regained power in the general election of November, 1957, by the narrow margin of two seats. The Party came to office committed in principle to recognising the government of the People's Republic of China, even if this had not been a specific plank in the 1957 election platform. In view of this, it might have been expected that sometime during the term of the new government, New Zealand would extend diplomatic recognition to China. It did not happen. In the final analysis, the government found the constraints articulated by the National government as compelling for itself. Nash was not prepared to take a course that was strongly opposed by the United States. New Zealand continued to urge on its allies the desirability of recognising China, but assured them it would not act unilaterally. The possible effects of Western recognition on non-Communist Asian governments were now appreciated by the Labour government, and Nash was particularly concerned for Formosa. China's policies themselves during the government's term of office did nothing to help bring about a suitable political atmosphere for recognition.

On New Year's Day, 1958, Walter Nash, who had taken the External Affairs portfolio as well as the Prime Minister's office, listed the foreign policy goals of the new government. As has been noted by one scholar, a reference to policy towards the People's Republic of China was conspicuous by its absence from the list, considering the Labour Party's reiteration of the necessity for recognition during its Opposition years.[1] Once in a position to implement its wish, the Labour Party was suddenly much more cautious. In eight declared aims for the coming year, the nearest Nash came to broaching the China question was his pledge to establish new diplomatic posts abroad "where necessary".[2]

A question in the House of Representatives in January brought out the fact that Labour in office did not consider the recognition of China a matter of pressing urgency. Asked by National's R. Hanan whether the Labour government intended to recognise the Chinese Communist government, Nash said that recognition had to come sooner or later, but left no doubt that as far as his government was concerned, it would be later.

"The government considers that the question .. does not warrant precipitate action".[3]

The Prime Minister said that in the world situation as it was at the time, the timing of any decision was "obviously a very delicate problem". Nash did not define the world situation, but was probably referring to the absence of any climate of detente.

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[1] Shuker, R.G. "*N.Z. Policy and Attitudes towards Communist China*", unpublished M.A. Thesis, V.U.W. 1971, p145.

[2] *E.A.R.* January, 1958, p15

[3] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 315, p217, January 29, 1958

He implied that recognition would come during the government's term of office by assuring the House that it would have the chance to debate the issue "when the occasion arises". The Prime Minister acknowledged that the recognition decision was too important a one to be taken unilaterally. The final decision would be taken "only after the fullest consultation with our allies and other friendly countries".

The rigid attitude of the United States government was the biggest obstacle to positive action on the part of its small ally. Shortly after assuming office, Nash had approached A.D. McIntosh, the Secretary of External Affairs, and told him that he wished to recognise the People's Republic. The Secretary said he would draw up a list of advantages and disadvantages of the move for the Prime Minister to ponder. The most considerable disadvantage was the fact that recognition of China would mean "a break with America".[4] Recognition, it was believed, would have been regarded as an unfriendly act by the United States and would have quite markedly damaged relations with that country at a time when New Zealand felt the need for the American alliance very strongly.[5]

Sir Arnold Nordmeyer, who was Nash's Minister of Finance, remembers that the Prime Minister was "very conscious of the fact that at that stage British interest in this area was diminishing, and from a defence viewpoint it appeared as if we would have to rely, in the event of further trouble, to a greater extent on the United

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[4] Sir Alister McIntosh, Interview, 21.2.74

[5] Bruce M. Brown, private secretary to Nash, interview, 23.1.75

States than would otherwise have been the case ... even though he may have personally felt rather strongly about the need to recognise the Chinese government, he would feel that it would be unwise to get off-side with the United States".[6]

Labour had been in office just over a month when the United States made public another statement of its opposition to the recognition of China. Secretary of State Dulles, addressing the National Press Club on January 17, 1958, said that the United States would recognise the government of China "anytime it would serve our interests". At the present time, however, it did not serve the United States' interests to recognise China.[7]

The attitude of the American government, and its possible reaction to a New Zealand recognition of China, was very much to the fore of the Prime Minister's mind when he discussed recognition with the visiting British Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan, a little later the same month.

Macmillan noted in his memoirs that some Commonwealth Prime Ministers, "particularly Nash in New Zealand", felt very strongly about the American insistence that Chiang Kai-shek's representative should occupy China's seat on the United Nations Security Council. During his visit to New Zealand, Nash explained to him, "more than once and at some length" why he wanted to recognise Communist China.

"At the same time, he was very anxious not to offend the United States government".[8]

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[6] Sir Arnold Nordmeyer, Interview, 30.5.74

[7] *Dominion*, January 18, 1958, p11

[8] Macmillan, H. "*Riding the Storm*", p542

Macmillan himself did not offer Nash any encouragement to pursue the matter. "I was obliged to tell him that I did not think our recognition, although based on sound tradition, had done us much good. Indeed, rather the reverse, since we had failed to follow up recognition by supporting their claim to the Chinese seat at the United Nations".

The desire not to incur the wrath of the American government was based not only on practical grounds, as far as Nash was concerned, but on personal ones, too. Nordmeyer believes that Nash's very close involvement with the United States as New Zealand's ambassador there during the Second World War led to his being "very considerably influenced by United States thinking". Nash, he feels, was "personally reluctant to take any step that might offend the government".[9]

Apart from the bi-lateral strains between New Zealand and the United States which would be set up by a unilateral recognition of the People's Republic, the government's advisers were concerned about the possible effects on the Unites States' international position of a New Zealand initiative on the China question.[10] To weaken the position of New Zealand's security guarantor in any way would be irresponsible, and for New Zealand to go off at a tangent in this matter could be for her to stab her own side in the Cold War in the back. In the battle for influence in Asia between the West and the Communist powers, a New Zealand recognition could cause uncommitted nations to have doubts about American policies. The Australian

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[9] Nordmeyer, Interview, 30.5.74

[10] Interview, Officer, Research Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 31.5.74

government appreciated this point. The Australian Minister of External Affairs, R.G. Casey, told the Australian House of Representatives in March, 1959:

> "The view of the Australian government is that recognition by Australia at this time could be exploited by Peking in such ways as to affect adversely attitudes in Asian countries towards, and confidence in, United States policies and objectives".[11]

External Affairs Department advice to Nash emphasised two factors - the damage that would be done to the American connection, and the inutility of any diplomatic link to China.

McIntosh told Nash, as Macmillan had done, that Britain had achieved little by recognition. The Chinese government's attitude was unfriendly at least partly because Britain would not acknowledge China's sovereignty over Taiwan. British representation had been confined to the Chargé d'Affaires level. New Zealand could expect no better treatment, since her position on Taiwan was similar. Diplomatic relations could be only imperfectly achieved. What then would New Zealand get out of recognition? Were the country's best interests served by maintaining the friendship of the United States, or by throwing that overboard and recognising China in an imperfect fashion?[12] It would be better not to grant recognition until there was some tangible political advantage to be derived from doing so.[13]

In the existing circumstances, McIntosh believed, recognition was an unrealistic option. A change in New Zealand's China policy

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[11] *Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates*, House of Representatives, vol. 24, p196, 13 August, 1959

[12] McIntosh Interview, 21.2.74

[13] Interview Officer, Research Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

should only be made in the context of a changed China policy by the whole Western alliance. That, in turn, was dependent upon a change in the attitude of the United States.

> "In my view, it depended on the Americans .. there was no point in the rest of us moving unless and until America showed a disposition to move".[14]

New Zealand's tack, therefore, should be to try and modify American views. The government could do this by constantly expressing New Zealand's belief in the need for a change, and by enlisting the aid of other allies who held similar views - such as Canada - in making the view carry weight. In time, New Zealand might be able to slowly erode the hardline American position.[15]

A memorandum written in August, 1958, and kept by Nash, reiterated that advice.

> "It is obvious that at this stage New Zealand would do more harm than good by unilateral recognition and/or by voting for the admission of Communist China to the United Nations ... the most profitable approach, even if long drawn out, appears to be one of persuading the United States to revise her attitude, on practical as well as ethical grounds".

The memorandum continued: "Apart from the adamant opposition of individual American statesmen to the recognition of China, perhaps the biggest stumbling block is American public opinion, itself very efficiently moulded by past and present administrations for policy reasons. If the United States government can first be privately persuaded to admit the desirability of accepting the Chinese Communist government, sufficient time must be given it to recondition American public opinion before making any overt move towards recognition".[16]

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[14] McIntosh Interview

[15] Interview, Officer, Research Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

[16] Nash papers Bundle 117

The author of the memorandum believed that the practical grounds on which China had to be recognised were that non-recognition and non-admission to the United Nations were strengthening Russian ties with China, which was not good for the comfort and security of the free world. These ties, the officer held, were not natural. Inherently, the Russian-Chinese relationship had ultimately to develop into one of mutual suspicion and distrust, since neither could envisage being a satellite of the other. As long as China had no direct voice in world councils, it would speak and act in close collaboration with Russia. When China had a voice, through increased diplomatic recognition and admission to the United Nations, it would have less need of Russian good offices.

Prime Minister Nash was thus confronted with a choice - going ahead as per party policy or bowing to departmental advice. Nash could not make up his mind[17] - a characteristic he was noted for. He decided to think the matter over, which was tantamount to a negative decision. In later years, he was to blame the Secretary of External Affairs for having stopped him recognising China the moment the party came into office.[18]

The Labour government had no support in the matter from its other main ally, Australia. The government there was of a different political colour and not interested in opening relations with China.

In March, 1958, Nash attended the South-east Asia Treaty Organisation's conference at Manila, and here he was reminded

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[17] McIntosh Interview 21.2.74

[18] Ibid.

forcefully of American policy on China.

American Secretary of State John Foster Dulles said that it was "essential" that the free world should stand firm and united, "not trying to buy peace by conceding to Communist imperialism the victories that would enhance its prestige and prolong the reactionary and abhorrent aspects of its life".[19]

When Dulles spoke of victories that would enhance China's prestige, he meant diplomatic recognition. A State Department explanation of American China policy issued in August, 1958, claimed that "the extension of diplomatic recognition by a Great Power normally carries with it enhanced international standing and prestige. Denial of recognition, on the other hand, is a positive handicap to the regime affected ...".[20]

At this meeting, Nash seems to have followed External Affairs advice on tactics by urging that China be recognised without saying that New Zealand would go ahead and grant recognition on its own. Casey, the Australian Minister of External Affairs, noted in his diary that

> "Nash ... indicated to the Council that he did not propose to rush into the recognition of Communist China, though he thought such action was inevitable sooner or later".[21]

After his arrival in Hong Kong, following the SEATO meeting, Nash declared that he had learnt much "both here and in Manila" that would help the government to decide its policy on the recognition of Red China, action which it had sought while in opposition. The

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[19] *Department of State Bulletin (D.O.S.B.)*, March 31, 1958, p508

[20] *D.O.S.B.* September 8, 1958, p387

[21] Baron Casey of Berwick, pers. comm. 20.5.74

strength of the counter-arguments was implicitly acknowledged by the Prime Minister's allowance that "all the ramifications would have to be debated before such a step was taken".[22] Asked his opinion of Dulles' anti-Peking recognition remarks in Manila, Nash conceded that Dulles had put forward "a clear, firm argument", but added that "that does not mean it will change my mind".[23] Indeed, the Prime Minister used the occasion to make a further declaration of principle. "The Peking government ought to be recognised as the governing body of China", he stated. Nevertheless, Dulles had made a great impression on Nash at Manila. The two had got on tremendously well, and although Nash regarded Dulles as a conservative, the New Zealand Prime Minister had great respect for the American and would not disregard his views lightly.[24] An indication that Nash had, as Casey's diary records, put aside any thoughts of immediate recognition came when the Prime Minister raised the possibility of extending trade with mainland China "without necessarily involving recognition of the Peking government".[25] Asked on his return to New Zealand whether he had any specific proposals to put before Parliament on the recognition issue, he admitted that he had not. "I have not changed my mind that the mainland government should be recognised as the government, but we want to discuss every angle before we take action".[26] A radio interviewer put the question to the Prime Minister again. "Having come back from this tour, would you like to say anything about the possibility of our recognition of the People's Republic of China?"

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[22] *O.D.T.* March 17, 1958, p1

[23] *O.D.T.* March 18, 1958, p1

[24] McIntosh Interview 21.2.74

[25] *O.D.T.* March 17, 1958, p1

[26] *O.D.T.* April 3, 1958, p2

Nash replied:

> "No. We said at the election, and I repeat it now, that the People's Government of China should be recognised as the government of China and we will consider the best ways and means of removing any difficulties in the way of doing that. But there are difficulties that must be considered before we take the final step .. We will do all we can to ensure what we think ought to be done to bring it about at the earliest possible moment".[27]

Some members of the parliamentary party were impatient for action on the China issue. W.W. Freer had asked the Prime Minister in Parliament in January to make an early statement on the government's attitude to the People's Republic, "so that the policy of this country will conform to that of the United Kingdom".[28] According to one scholar, Caucus was trying to put pressure on Nash to recognise China throughout the three years of the Labour government.[29] Cabinet, however, was solid for the Nash line,[30] and as Ministers bulk larger in a small majority, the Prime Minister could not have been greatly worried. The China recognition issue was never formally brought before Cabinet by any Minister, leaving Nash to determine policy.[31] As far as the rest of Cabinet was concerned, China was a very low priority at a time of economic crisis. The burning question of early 1958 was the state of the economy and the measures to be taken to correct it, and a Cabinet under pressure in this field had no time to pressure Nash on foreign affairs issues. Nordmeyer recalls: "We were very much involved in domestic policy. Foreign policy, therefore, did

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[27] Nash Papers B2336 N.Z.B.S. Interview with the PM 3.4.58

[28] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 315, p218, 29 January, 1958

[29] Mitchell, A.V. "Caucus: The New Zealand Parliamentary Parties" in *Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies* March, 1968, p18

[30] Mathison, J. pers. comm. 9.5.74.

[31] Nordmeyer Interview, 30.5.74

not come very much to the fore during that period".[32]

Apart from the question of priorities, there was the powerful constraint of the government's electoral position. Labour had squeaked into power with a majority of two, so could claim no mandate for radical changes. It didnot feel itself in a position to make unpopular moves that would lose it votes at the next election. After the so-called "Black Budget" of June, 1958, the government's popularity was already in decline. Nordmeyer recalls:

> "China didn't rank in importance at that time, because .. with a majority of one we were deeply concerned about the New Zealand political attitude and we had a rather sensitive ear to the ground at that stage".[33]

The Labour Party conference in May approved a recommendation to the government that it "should seek an early opportunity to give effect to party policy in respect to the recognition of the Chinese People's government".[34] A radical and a conservative amendment were proposed to the China remit, but each failed to be adopted. A representative of the Wellington Labourers' Union moved that the remit read that the government seek an early opportunity to give effect to the party's China policy, consistent with New Zealand's obligations to the free peoples of Asia.[35] In other words, the government should not move on the recognition issue until the free states of Asia were satisfied that such a step would not harm them. Conference would have none of the qualification. Equally, though,

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[32] Ibid.

[33] Nordmeyer Interview, 30.5.74. The Labour government's effective majority was one, after the provision of a Speaker.

[34] New Zealand Labour Party-*Report of the 42nd Annual Conference* p32

[35] The New Zealand Labour Party - *Report of the 42nd Annual Conference* p31

Conference was not prepared to force the government's hand. A second amendment proposed that the Chinese People's Republic be recognised "within the life of the present parliament".[36] This too was voted down.

Nash himself, in delivering the report of the parliamentary party, did not touch directly on the China issue at all. Obliquely however, he took a swipe at American policy on China which was dictating the attitudes of its allies.

> "In what might be termed the post-Sputnik era of the nuclear age, we could be in some danger of becoming imprisoned in fixed conceptions of policy that have come to bear increasingly little relation with reality. It is salutary to remember that in international affairs, 'all things flow, and there is nothing constant but change'".[37]

In August and September 1958 an international crisis developed when the Chinese Communists began an artillery bombardment of the Nationalist-held islands just offshore from the coast of Fukien province. The capture of these islands was regarded as a necessary preliminary to the invasion of the major Nationalist stronghold on Formosa. The United States government, committed to the defence of Formosa, implied that it would help the Nationalists defend the islands. The crisis dominated the international affairs debate in the New Zealand parliament in September, 1958.

Labour members expressed a certain amount of sympathy for China's claim to the offshore islands, while at the same time being disturbed by China's readiness to use force to solve disputed questions.

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[36] Ibid. p32

[37] Ibid. p22

The Prime Minister recognised that the crisis had not helped the cause of recognition, since China was even less acceptable to the United States than previously. On September 11 he said:

> "As for the recognition of Communist China by the free world, the final solution can only come about in the natural course of evolution and development, and that is a long journey".[38]

The Prime Minister did not refer to recognition by New Zealand, but by the free world - a further indication that he saw a New Zealand recognition of China coming in the context of a change in attitude by the Western alliance generally, rather than unilaterally. A change in Western attitudes depended on the evolution of American public opinion and possibly also of Chinese international behaviour. It would thus be a "long journey" to recognition: not something for the near future.

One Cabinet member - the Attorney-General, H.G.R. Mason - believed that China's foreign policy should not be relevant to the recognition question. Speaking of a National member's contribution to the debate, Mason said:

> "I was rather disappointed in his attitude ... when he spoke of the reasons for not recognising Communist China - that it had been very unfriendly to neighbouring states; that it had taken up an aggressive attitude, that it had been condemned by the United Nations for what it had done .."[39]

Evidently none of those reasons was considered sufficient to deny China recognition. The Attorney-General went on to say: "Will anyone tell us if the Chinese have been encouraged by any of the people condemning them to take a different course of action? ... the

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[38] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 318, p1721, September 11, 1958

[39] Ibid. p1743

point is how little disposition there is to look at the matter from other people's point of view".

Mason was one of the Labour members who tended to see a cause-and-effect relationship between continued denial of recognition and China's apparent aggressiveness.

W.W. Freer was quick to seize on the fact that China had shown a willingness to negotiate with the United States on the Formosa Straits issue, as proof of her suitability for United Nations membership. He bluntly asked the Prime Minister whether he would instruct New Zealand's delegate to the United Nations to support China's admission to that body in view of the offer of the Prime Minister of China to negotiate with the United States, and of the fact that China had been excluded from the United Nations in the past because some nations thought that she would resort to force in the settlement of disputes rather than negotiation.

Nash replied:

> "The government does not consider, having regard to the almost continuous bombardment with heavy casualties at present, that this is an appropriate time to press the issue with regard to the representation of China in the United Nations. Because of existing conditions, and the strong opinions held on both sides, the New Zealand government feels that any move at present to oust the Nationalist Chinese and introduce the Communist Chinese into the United Nations would cause irreparable damage to that organisation".[40]

The damage to the United Nations would come from a possible United States withdrawal from that institution. Nash apparently had no objection to "ousting" the Nationalist Chinese from the institution, only to the timing of such a move. There was no suggestion at this

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[40] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 318, p2256, October 3, 1958

point that the Republic of China was entitled to separate representation.

In September, it had been announced by the Minister of Industries and Commerce, P.N. Holloway, that the first visit by a New Zealand trade officer to mainland China would be made. Holloway was quick, however, to say there was no political significance in the visit. "It will be strictly business aimed at exploring prospects for increasing exports".[41]

In the latter part of the month, Nash embarked on a three-week trip to North America, the highpoint of which was the meeting of the ANZUS Council.

On his return, reporters at Whenuapai airport asked the Prime Minister: "What is stopping New Zealand from recognising the Peking government?" Nash replied, "No-one is stopping us. Unfortunately it is not just a simple matter of just deciding to recognise the Communist government. There are many millions of Chinese outside the mainland and we have to watch that".[42]

Here for the first time in his public utterances on the subject, the Prime Minister had advanced a specific constraint on recognition. Although Nash did not spell out the relationship of the Overseas Chinese to the recognition problem, it had been detailed in the House of Representatives the previous year by his Labour front-bench colleague, P.G. Connolly, who was now Minister of Defence.

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[41] *O.D.T.* September 20, 1958, p15

[42] *O.D.T.* October 16, 1958, p1

Connolly told the House that the Americans were against any move, such as recognition, that gave Communist China "face" because of the influence that "face" had on the Chinese minorities in South-east Asia.

"I think the policy America has been pursuing is to keep those ten million Chinese looking towards Chiang Kai-shek.. instead of northwards to mainland China".[43]

Any move which detracted from the authority of the Nationalist government on Formosa and added to that of the Communist government might increase the ability of the latter to win the allegiance of the overseas Chinese and thus turn them into instruments for subversion against governments which New Zealand supported. The State Department release of August, 1958, on the subject of recognition of China had said:

> "Recognition of Communist China by the United States .. would have such a profound psychological effect on the overseas Chinese that it would make inevitable the transfer of the loyalties of large numbers to the Communist side. This in turn would undermine the ability of the host countries to resist pressures tending to promote the expansion of Communist influence and power".[44]

The Labour government, in its Defence Review of 1958, had made a commitment, like its predecessor, to the preservation of the independence of the countries of South-east Asia. The Review had stated that New Zealand "recognised the importance to her own security of assisting the free democracies of South-east Asia to maintain the independence achieved since World War Two".[45] Having declared an interest in the continuing independence of South-east Asia, the government was not

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[43] *N.Z.P.D. vol. 311, p.47, 13 June, 1957*

[44] *Dept. of State Bulletin* Sept. 8, 1958, p387

[45] *Review of Defence Policy 1958* AJHR A-12, p5, paragraph 13

likely to make a policy move that could adversely affect that independence.

The fact that the possible effect of recognition on the security of New Zealand's Asian allies was a major constraint on New Zealand pursuing the line she desired was reiterated in the Prime Minister's review of foreign affairs in 1958 a couple of months later.

> "The problem of recognition of the Communist government of China remains one of vital importance",

Nash said on January 2, 1959.

> "The New Zealand government is very much aware of the international implications of any decision to grant recognition. I believe that recognition is inevitable. But New Zealand can take this step only after weighing all the factors, particularly regarding the effect on countries contiguous to mainland China".[46]

The Prime Minister stated that the gravest crisis of the previous year in the Far East - apart from the shelling of Quemoy and Matsu - had arisen from "the heavy pressure exerted by Communist China on neighbouring countries of Asia". The American government believed that recognition could affect the will of those countries to resist that pressure, and Nash, it seems, was conscious of the argument. The United States State Department had declared in August, 1958, that

> "recognition of Communist China by the United States would have an adverse effect on the other free governments of Asia which could be disastrous to the cause of the free world in that part of the world.
>
> Those nations which are closely allied to the United States and are striving to maintain their independence on the perimeter of Chinese Communist power, especially in Korea and Vietnam, would be profoundly concerned and demoralised. They would interpret such action as abandonment of their cause by the United States".[47]

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[46] *E.A.R.* January, 1959, p12

[47] *D.O.S.B.* September 8, 1958, p387, col. 1

In February, 1959, Nash paid an official visit to Japan. During a "thorough and exhaustive exchange of views" with Japanese leaders at Osaka, Nash outlined the New Zealand government's policy towards Communist China. The Prime Minister reiterated that the Peking government should be recognised, but this time revealed two further constraints on action by the Labour government. He said that the consequences of recognition, such as the effect on the United Nations and the status of Formosa, should be weighed carefully before any decision was made.[48]

Nash had implied that the diplomatic recognition of China by New Zealand and other countries would logically commit them to support China's entry into the United Nations. He made the point explicit later in the year in his annual report to the Labour Party Conference. "Recognition", he said then, "would seem to involve also the question of Chinese representation in the United Nations Organisation. The issue is, therefore, a complex one, and aspects of it cannot be considered in isolation".[49]

The United States had violent objections to United Nations membership for China, and there had been in the past indications that if China were admitted the United States would withdraw. This would destroy the institution. New Zealand could not add her vote to that of the faction whose triumph would drive the United States from the body. Sir Alister McIntosh recalls:

> "The Americans were pretty good at wringing our arms, and putting it to us that we had to support them on this issue, which was vital; that they didn't want to leave the United Nations, and that there was always a danger that if China were admitted, Congress ... would force them out".[50]

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[48] *Evening Star* February 23, 1959, p3

[49] *Evening Star* May 6, 1959, p4

[50] Sir Alister McIntosh, Interview 21.2.74

Department of External Affairs appraisals noted that the Free world would be disadvantaged by the Chinese seat on the Security Council going to an unfriendly power. This, it was believed, could cripple the United Nations as an effective peace-keeping organisation.[51]

New Zealand's voting stance on the China representation question at the United Nations General Assembly did not change in substance in 1958. India had requested the inclusion on the agenda of the Assembly of an item entitled 'Question of the Representation of China'. The United States countered with a two-part moratorium resolution. The first part resolved that India's request be rejected, and the second clause asked that the Assembly decide not to consider any proposals to exclude the representatives of the Republic of China or to seat the representatives of the Government of the People's Republic of China. India came back with an amendment to the resolution, which proposed substituting the word "accepts" for "rejects" in the first clause, and deleting the second clause altogether. The New Zealand government decided to show sympathy for the governments which wanted a discussion of the China question, by abstaining on the Indian amendment to the first American clause. New Zealand also abstained on the vote to pass the first clause. While New Zealand would not stand in the way of those nations wanting a discussion of the issue, neither would the government encourage such a discussion with a positive vote. The time was not propitious, the New Zealand delegate said.[52]

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[51] Interview, Officer, Research Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

[52] *E.A.R.* September, 1958, p29

The government opposed the Indian amendment to the second clause, which called for the deletion of the latter, and voted for the second clause. On the vote to pass or reject the American resolution as a whole, New Zealand was one of 46 countries that voted for it.

Nash had realised earlier in the decade that concern for Formosa was a possible obstacle to recognition. In 1953, Nash had said that recognition of Peking could be interpreted as sanctioning her claim to Formosa, a move he opposed. The Labour Party believed that the Formosans had no desire to come under the sway of the mainland government.

During the years in Opposition, party members had suggested that Formosa be put under United Nations trusteeship. In government, the party ceased to advocate trusteeship, but believed that Formosa should be denied to Communist China. In the 1958 international affairs debate, Nash had said:

> "I cannot see any reason why there should not be an arrangement ... which would enable Formosa to be completely independent and completely demilitarised ... The Formosan people could go their own way under their own management, with, for the time being, a guarantee by the United Nations of safety from war ... I certainly do not think the solution is the handing over of Formosa to Communist China".[53]

The problem was that the government of the People's Republic made acknowledgement of its claim to Taiwan (as it called Formosa) a prerequisite for the establishment of full diplomatic relations. The British government had recognised the Communist government in 1950, but continued to maintain that the status of Taiwan was undetermined and had kept a consultate open on the island. As a result, the

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[53] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 318, p1721, 11 September, 1958

Chinese had confined British representation in China to the Chargé d'Affaires level, refusing to accept an ambassador. A.H. Nordmeyer recalls:

> "One of the reasons we were reluctant to recognise China - not withstanding the fact that we had undertaken in our policy to do so - was that Mr Nash became informed that the Chinese were not anxious at all to have any country recognise them unless it recognised their sovereignty over Taiwan. And to recognise their sovereignty over Taiwan would, in our view, have meant bloodshed".[54]

Apart from the government's reluctance to sign away, as it were, Taiwan's right, as it saw it, to a non-Communist existence, there was also the fact that New Zealand's ally, the United States, was committed to defend Taiwan under the 1954 treaty. An acknowledgement of China's claim to Taiwan would put New Zealand on the opposite side of the fence from her ally in the event of a Sino-American clash over the island.

Taiwan, however, had a significance wider than the fate of the people living there. It was a piece of "free" - or at least, non-Communist - Asia: a symbolic outpost of the West. To hand over Formosa to the Chinese Communist government - symbolically or literally - would reflect a lack of interest in preserving the existence of other Western-oriented governments in Asia, and perhaps fatally undermine their confidence. They might come to accommodations with Peking or be otherwise more open to Chinese pressures and influence. If Labour were to acknowledge the claim of the People's Republic to Taiwan, the party would have to abandon the whole concept of containment. Abandoning the containment concept would be to declare that Chinese domination of South-east Asia would not conflict with New Zealand's interests.

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[54] Nordmeyer Interview, 30.5.74

A recognition of the People's Republic without any guarantee about Taiwan would mean a rejection of the premises upon which SEATO was constructed.

Australian Prime Minister Menzies spelled out the implications of abandoning Taiwan to the Australian House of Representatives in 1960:

> "The simple truth of the proposal that we recognise Communist China is that we must also advocate a course of policy that will hand over these 10 million people - now free - to Communist control. I invite honourable members to consider what that would mean ... First, it would mean, of course, the complete destruction of SEATO ... if, cynically, we were prepared to hand over Formosa to the Communists in China, what effect would it have on the protocol countries - Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, South Vietnam and Malaya? They would say 'Well, if you can give away 10 million people to Formosa, you can give away 10 million people somewhere else'. It would utterly destroy the whole basis of confidence on which SEATO rests. I said so at the Ministerial Conference of SEATO, in Washington, with the unanimous approval of all the Ministers there present".[55]

New Zealand's Prime Minister Nash was one of the Ministers present on that occasion.

The experience of France in 1964 was to show that it was possible for some countries to recognise the People's Republic without making an explicit recognition of Communist authority over Taiwan, but in 1958 the Labour government knew only of the cold attitude of China towards a Britain that maintained that Taiwan's status was undetermined. It seems that Labour's leaders had moral qualms about just avoiding the issue of Taiwan's status. They wanted Taiwan's position as a separate entity recognised by China before China was recognised. This was made clear by Nash in the New Zealand Parliament in August, 1960. Certainly

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[55] *Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates - House of Representatives* vol. 28, p987, 8 September, 1960

this would have been the only way around a detrimental effect on the friendly countries of South-east Asia.

Further constraints on recognition were acknowledged in the second year of the Labour government, and these were related to China's international behaviour.

In March, 1959, there was a rebellion in Tibet against Chinese rule. The Tibetan ruler, the Dalai Lama, fled to India, along with some thousands of others. The actions of the Chinese army in suppressing the revolt aroused concern in the West. Prime Minister Nash said on April 7: "As free democracies, we are naturally deeply concerned at what has been happening in Tibet, as we should be at similar events anywhere else in the world".[56]

A month later, Nash stated that Chinese actions in Tibet had further complicated the problem of recognition. In his report to the Labour Party Conference in May, Nash said:

> "The question of the recognition of Communist China remains a very difficult problem, by no means simplified by recent events in Tibet. The government has stated its belief that recognition of the Chinese People's Republic must come. The question is one of timing, since it is essential that recognition should have the minimum of undesirable consequences".[57]

Chinese actions in Tibet ensured that the 'time' for recognition would be further off. Even if all other constraints had fallen away, it would have been impolitic to appear to be giving the seal of approval to the Chinese government just as it was horrifying the world.

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[56] *E.A.R.* April, 1959, p18

[57] New Zealand Labour Party - *Report of the 43rd Annual Conference*, p16

Answering a parliamentary question on recognition in July, the Prime Minister said:

> "... it is only to be expected that the international conduct of the Chinese Communist authorities - and notably their recent actions in Tibet - will influence New Zealand and other countries in their judgement of the appropriate timing of a decision on recognition".[58]

The uprising in Tibet had given the Chinese a concern with sealing the borders of that country, and the ill-defined boundary between Tibet and India now led to a deterioration of relations with India. In August, 1959, at Longju, Chinese and Indian troops clashed with slight casualties on both sides. In a protest note to Peking the next day, the Indian government accused China of deliberate aggression in an attempt to implement border claims by force.[59] In September, in a letter to Nehru, Chinese premier Chou En-lai informed the Indian Prime Minister that China did not recognise the border claimed by India between Assam and Tibet and, in effect, laid claim to a large slice of what the Indians regarded as their territory. The next month, at Kongha Pass, there was another clash between Indian and Chinese troops.

In late 1959, China's relations with Indonesia also deteriorated, after the Indonesian government passed laws restricting the business activities of aliens, most of which were of Chinese nationality. The Chinese government was quick to condemn the Indonesian government and warn that it would not simply look on while Chinese were persecuted abroad.[60] The Indonesians in turn complained that Chinese Embassy officials were roaming over the country inciting Chinese to defy government regulations.

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[58] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 319, p421, 15 July, 1959

[59] Maxwell, N. *India's China War* pp109-110

[60] Dutt, V.P. *China's Foreign Policy* pp162-63

In his end of year summation of foreign affairs, Nash reiterated that the principal problem remaining with the recognition question was that of timing, and that this would be affected by China's foreign policy.

> "During the past year ... the actions of the Chinese authorities have been disturbing and provocative, no less towards China's neighbours, than towards the principal Western powers.
>
> Such conduct - and the attitude of mind it reflects - has scarcely created the right atmosphere in which to consider steps towards more general acknowledgement of the established position of the Communist regime. It is hardly surprising that the United Nations General Assembly this year expressed the concern of world opinion about developments in Tibet, and decided once again not to consider the representation of China in the United Nations".[61]

Nash recognised that diplomatic recognition of China by the Western allies - the only context in which he was prepared to recognise - could only come about in an atmosphere of detente, such as had existed for a short time after the Geneva conference in 1954. Actions by the Chinese such as those in Tibet or on the borders of India postponed the coming of that atmosphere by accentuating Western distrust of China.

In the 1959 parliamentary session, Nash had been asked by Duncan Rae to state clearly his government's policy on the matter of recognition. The Prime Minister had replied that while believing that recognition was inevitable, the government acknowledged that such a step could be taken only after the fullest consultation with other friendly powers, Asian as well as Western, which might be affected by any New Zealand decision.[62]

In a letter to Rae shortly afterwards, Nash pointed out that there would be no tangible benefits to the free world from recognition at that time, and that, indeed, recognition would be of material

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[61] *E.A.R.* January, 1960, p33

[62] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 319, p421, 15 July, 1959

assistance to China in her campaign to increase her influence in Asia. Because of the geographic proximity of New Zealand to Asia, New Zealand did not want to see Communist domination of that continent.[63] In this letter, *realpolitik* dominated. Recognition might harm the cause New Zealand sponsored in Asia.

Nash also recognised that recognition of China by the West had definite advantages. A policy of isolation and confrontation was not conducive to solving on-going problems. China was a power with a great deal of influence in Asia, and her inclusion in any international discussions was imperative if any progress were to be made.

At the end of the year Nash declared that "no settlement of major issues, such as disarmament ... could be considered securely established unless it provided for the full participation of the Chinese Communist authorities. Considerations of this nature make it impossible, in my view, to continue to act indefinitely as if the Peking regime did not exist".[64]

In March Nash reiterated to the Dunedin Chamber of Commerce that provision would have to be made for the full participation of the Chinese Communist authorities in any disarmament conference. He said that New Zealand had a special interest in ensuring that the military capacity of "this rapidly growing power" was brought under international control at the earliest possible opportunity.[65]

At the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' conference in London in May, 1960, Nash continued to promote the cause of bringing China into

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[63] Information provided by the Research Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

[64] *E.A.R.* January, 1960, p33. Statement by the Prime Minister, 30 December, 1959

[65] *O.D.T.* March 10, 1960, p1

the community of nations. He said:

> "I think there is a growing realisation that the policy of keeping China at arm's length from the Western world is one of diminishing returns and may not be in the best interests of our peace and security in the region".[66]

Following up this view, the New Zealand Prime Minister went on to suggest to the SEATO Foreign Ministers at their conference in Washington that consideration should be given to China's entry into the United Nations. Nash suggested that agreement to Communist China's membership in the United Nations might help ease the tense atmosphere in the wake of the failed 1960 summit meeting.

The New Zealand Prime Minister said that the United States had tried to ignore Communist China, and that means should be found to bring it into the family of nations.[67]

Nash's proposition produced a sharp reaction from the American Secretary of State, now Christian Herter.[68] He launched into a "blistering attack"[69] on Communist China, calling it an outlaw, and saying that the United States would not agree to its admission to the United Nations. Herter contended that giving China the prestige of United Nations membership would only strengthen Peking's campaign to neutralise Japan, and to install Communist governments in small nations around the Chinese border.[70] He also made the point that Communist China had made it clear that complete abandonment of the Taipei government was a prerequisite to the acceptance of membership.[71]

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[66] *O.D.T.* May 16, 1960, p4

[67] Noble G. Bernard, *"Christian A.. Herter"* p232

[68] John Foster Dulles had died in May, 1959

[69] *O.D.T.* June 3, 1960, p7

[70] Ibid.

[71] Noble G. Bernard, op. cit., p232

The New Zealand Prime Minister, however, did not give up. In a later discussion, Nash strongly advocated diplomatic recognition, while other members, notably Australia, the Philippines and Thailand, attacked Nash's arguments, and, in varying degrees, supported Herter's arguments.[72] Herter stated that the United States had no intention of changing its policy of refusing to extend diplomatic recognition to Communist China.

Following this minor split, Nash conferred with Herter for some thirty minutes after the meeting closed. The Prime Minister told the press afterwards that they had discussed Communist China and the problem of whether Peking should be admitted to the United Nations. Asked about the difference of opinion between New Zealand and the United States, the Prime Minister revealed in his reply that the American had pushed him into retreat. "I think you have got to weigh it all up, all the factors associated with their admission and non-admission. We have said that we would recognise China. That is not necessarily recognising them to come into the United Nations".[73] Nash was prepared to continue to refrain from supporting China's entry to the United Nations, while clinging to the idea of extending diplomatic recognition.

The Prime Minister then went on to give the impression that China's recent behaviour in Asia was the main obstacle to recognition on New Zealand's part. He recalled that at the time of the New Zealand election in 1957, the Labour Party had said that it would recognise the government of mainland China. But, said Nash, since

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[72] Noble, op. cit., p233

[73] *O.D.T.* June 4, 1960, p6

then there had been the Chinese Communist suppression of the rebellion in Tibet, the border dispute with India, and other events in Asia. "That would make it very difficult for us to recognise them now. We want to find out when the time and circumstances would make it propitious to be done".[74]

In fact, of course, the Labour Party had said as little as possible about China in the election campaign of 1957. The subject had not been brought up in any of the major speeches. Nash's recollection showed, however, that despite the tactical silence on the subject, the party at the time still considered China recognition to be party policy, and this commitment was more strongly imprinted on his mind than the exigencies of that particular campaign.

Despite New Zealand's acquiescence in alliance views, and especially American views, the divergence of opinion between New Zealand and the United States as to the solution to the problem of China and the security of Asia remained. While the United States clung to a policy of isolation of China, Nash believed that a reaching out to China would produce better results. In the 1960 Annual Report of the Department of External Affairs, tabled in Parliament in July, the Prime Minister said that while Chinese conduct towards Tibet, Formosa and India was a handicap to early recognition,

> "I regard protracted exclusion of China from the United Nations and the international community as self-defeating. It is, moreover, a source of danger, since it tends to confirm Chinese leaders in their ignorance of the outside world and in their misconceptions of Chinese strength and capacities".[75]

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[74] *O.D.T.* June 4, 1960, p6

[75] *Annual Report of the Department of External Affairs 1960*, p6 A.J.H.R. A-1

Nash believed that recent troubles involving China only underlined the necessity for contact with the People's Republic.

> "On .. Asian questions, no lasting settlement is possible without the participation and co-operation of the Chinese People's Republic. I hold this opinion more strongly in the light of developments in China in the past year, and of its truculence towards India and Indonesia, its defiance of United Nations condemnation of its brutality in Tibet, its menacing actions in the Formosa Straits".

At the same time that he advocated a bridge-building policy, Nash appreciated the force of the American counter-arguments. He said: "I fully understand the objections of those who see Communist China as aggressive in character and intent, as a source of fear to its neighbours, and as a nation whose influence in the United Nations would inevitably be destructive and hostile".

Reaching out to China, Nash held, implied no less commitment to the Western cause. In the External Affairs debate in July, 1960, Nash said: "We are fully determined to stand by our friends and allies in the Western democracies .. but that does not mean that we do not associate with those who are not our friends". The Prime Minister admitted that China had been "forceful and unfair" to other countries - avoiding the use of the condemnatory 'aggressive' - but said that this could not stand in the way of recognition.[76]

When he wound up the debate, Nash claimed that the future of New Zealand was likely to be more affected by mainland China than by any other country. Since China exercised no economic influence over

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[76] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 322, p590 and p655, 14 and 15 July, 1960

New Zealand, the Prime Minister could only have been referring to the country's security.

Nash found himself subjected in the House that month to a barrage of questions by National Party members on the subject of the recognition of China. R.M. Algie asked why the government had done nothing about recognition if it was so keen on it. Opposition leader Holyoake accused the Prime Minister of double-talk, and trying to run with both the recognition hare and the non-recognition hounds. He pointed out that Nash had claimed in Washington that Communist China could not be recognised because of incidents in Tibet and on the Indian border.

"The incidents in Tibet and on the Indian border are of recent origin. What about the position prior to these incidents?"

Holyoake further stated that Nash had said that if Communist China were given recognition, then Formosa had to be protected, yet the Prime Minister knew that the Communist Chinese government would not agree to such an arrangement.[77]

Nevertheless, Nash was prepared to continue to insist that some definite arrangement over Formosa was a prerequisite to recognition. In August, 1960, he stated that he would not be a party to recognition unless Formosa was declared free without fear of aggression and unless it had some guarantee from the major nations that it would be defended against the Communist government of the mainland.

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[77] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 322, p330, 6 July, 1960

Nash said he had always said that if the mainland government would give up its claims to Formosa, then it ought to be recognised. New Zealand, because of its obligations to free peoples who wanted to run their own countries, could not agree to Formosa going to mainland China.[78]

After his insistence that recognition was only a matter of timing, Nash had revealed that there was still another major constraint on action. Communist China could not be recognised until it accepted a two Chinas solution. In July, the Prime Minister had said that recognition of the mainland government should be synchronised with recognition of the Government of Formosa.[79] Since New Zealand already recognised the Government of the Republic of China on Formosa, Nash seemed to be suggesting that the People's Republic would be recognised when it granted diplomatic recognition to the Republic of China.

At the general election in November, 1960, Nash's government was defeated, and it went out of office without having recognised China.

Conclusion

Since the end of the Korean War, the New Zealand Labour Party had been advocating the diplomatic recognition of China as a step towards peace in Asia. In doing so, it had separated itself from the foreign policy of the National Party. Once in office, however, the Labour Party was forced to face up to all the implications of

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[78] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 323, p1521, 16 August, 1960

[79] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 322, p325, 6 July, 1960

implementing its policy, and found itself with little freedom to manoeuvre.

The National Party government had openly admitted that it did not intend to promote policies that held the possibility of straining the alliance with the United States. The Labour Party had never admitted that the alliance could or should restrict any of the partners from exercising their independent policies, but in government it showed that it, too, was unwilling to take action that might conceivably jeopardise the alliance upon which it believed that New Zealand's security depended. It was prepared to continue to state its contrary views publicly, but not to take action on them unilaterally. However desirable a conciliatory approach to China might be, it did not rank in importance with preserving the goodwill of the United States in a threatening world. The Labour government accepted that New Zealand was a member of two alliances, and that the views of its partners should always be a constraint. Not only was New Zealand's proposed course of action strongly disapproved of by the United States, it was also not supported by any of the country's other allies. The Labour government's preferred tack, then, was to try to persuade its allies to its point of view, a task undertaken at the SEATO meetings of 1958 and 1960 without success.

The Labour Party was also, in office, more inclined to accept arguments advanced by its predecessor that recognition of China could adversely affect the country's wider interests. Both the National and Labour Parties had similar objectives - the preservation of non-Communist governments in Asia as bulwarks of New Zealand's security.

The Labour government, while believing that recognition of China was desirable, also believed that the containment of China's influence was necessary, and came to appreciate that the two objectives might not be compatible. Nash acknowledged that the transference of recognition from the Nationalists on Taiwan to the People's Republic might have adverse effects on the loyalties of the Chinese minorities in South-east Asia, and that it might also affect the confidence of non-Communist countries contiguous to China. The Prime Minister apparently realised, too, that a meaningful diplomatic relationship with China could only be established if the recognising country acknowledged China's claim to Taiwan, and repudiated the Nationalist government. This Nash would not do. Apart from recognising the right of the islanders to a non-Communist future should they desire it, there was also the fact that concern for Taiwan symbolised the Western nations' commitment to the preservation of non-Communist governments in Asia. While New Zealand continued to see a non-Communist Asia as important to her security, there could be no "betrayal" of Taiwan.

During 1959 and 1960, the Prime Minister continually emphasised that recognition was only a matter of correct timing, and that this was related to China's international behaviour. He said that recognition was affected by China's suppression of the Tibetan rebellion and the border troubles with India. Apparently recognition was dependent on an atmosphere of detente.

Even if non-recognition had not been essential to containment, it is possible that the Labour government may have held back because of the domestic political situation. Its tenuous grip on public affection - expressed by a narrow majority - dictated caution when approaching controversial moves. The party had recognised that

China recognition was a controversial move in the post-Bandung era by not re-including it as a plank in the 1957 election platform. Shortly after assuming office the government had been forced to take unpopular measures to correct the economic situation, and was in no position to give its opponents further ammunition.

CHAPTER 5

THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT AND CHINA, 1961-68

Introduction

During the nineteen-sixties, the National government consistently put forward two basic reasons for not changing New Zealand's longstanding policies with regard to the diplomatic recognition of China and its admission to the United Nations. These were China's international behaviour and New Zealand's commitment to Taiwan. Perhaps surprisingly, loyalty to the United States alliance, which figured prominently in justifications of China policy in the 1950s (and which was figuring in justifications of Vietnam policy) was not mentioned during the decade, although on one occasion the Prime Minister provided evidence that it was a continuing determinant of policy.

With regard to China's international behaviour, New Zealand was particularly concerned with China's encouragement of revolutionary elements in South Vietnam, as part of what the government saw as a Chinese attempt to regain suzerainty over South-east Asia. While China continued to pursue a policy of undermining non-Communist governments in South-east Asia, the government believed that any recognition was out of the question, since the maintenance of non-Communist governments in Asia was seen as a vital security interest of New Zealand. Only when China's "aggressive" foreign policy changed could there be progress towards an accommodation. In the United Nations, New Zealand argued that fealty to the principles of the Charter must be as weighty a criterion for entry as the reality

of Communist control of mainland China.

The 1960s saw the issue of Taiwan emerge as perhaps the fundamental public constraint on a positive policy towards China. Taiwan was portrayed now as a viable, separate nation with a right not to be incorporated into Communist China and a right to have this interest protected in the United Nations. New Zealand argued that a substitution of China for Taiwan in the Assembly would be construed as endorsing China's claim to take Taiwan over by force if necessary. Similarly, recognition of China would both endorse China's claim to Taiwan and preclude a New Zealand diplomatic relationship with the Taiwan government.

During the period of Labour government from 1957 to 1960, the Opposition National Party made it clear that it strongly opposed Labour's campaign for the recognition of the People's Republic of China. The grounds for its opposition had not varied from the party's time in office: recognition, it was felt, constituted an act of unnecessary disloyalty to New Zealand's greatest ally, and to the free governments of Asia fighting off Communist subversion. It implied acceptance of China's unacceptable international behaviour.

Questioned at the National Party's conference in July, 1959, on the party's policy towards Communist China, the Leader of the Opposition, K.J. Holyoake, said: "We feel that the time has not yet come for the recognition of Communist China".[1] Although a sparse

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[1] *Evening Star* July 27, 1959, p1

statement, it did show that the National Party, unlike the Americans, assumed that eventually some sort of acceptance of the People's Republic would have to be made. The time for recognition, however, would be when the Americans felt that it would benefit the Western world to do so.

The case for deference to the judgement of the larger ally was most strongly put in these years by R. Algie, former Minister of Education, in 1958.

> "For New Zealand to recognise Communist China without the approval of the United States would be running counter to one of our partners in ANZUS ... My view is that if the United States came to the conclusion that by giving Communist China recognition she would be going nearer towards peace in the Far East, it would be a step worth taking. I would go further and say I would not be in a hurry on any grounds at all to recognise Communist China before that is done by the United States. If the United States felt that the time was ripe then we, as her partner, although obviously a junior partner, could well follow along the same lines".[2]

Algie had stated that alliance partners had to move together, and New Zealand, as a junior member, must wait upon the senior member to agree to a course of action. Other party members agreed with this line of thought. D.M. Rae reiterated in July, 1960, that "external policy should be based on close support for the United States of America", and said that he believed that recognition of Communist China would "greatly weaken New Zealand's relations with the United States".[3] T.P. Shand stated in the same debate that New Zealand could not live under the umbrella of the democratic countries if it was not prepared to play its part in assisting its allies,[4] and D.J. Eyre asked: "Does the Labour government have to

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[2] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 318, p1731-32, 11 September, 1958

[3] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 322, p313, 6 July, 1960

[4] Ibid. p324

be reminded who won the battle of the Coral Sea? .. Let us stick to the principle of loyalty".[5]

The Leader of the Opposition, when he spoke in 1960 on the recognition issue, preferred to stress the need for loyalty to the non-Communist countries of Asia who were fighting Chinese influence, particularly those associated with New Zealand in SEATO. Why talk about recognising Communist China when it was trying to infiltrate and subvert those countries on its borders who were so vital to New Zealand, he asked Parliament in July.[6] The countries in South-east Asia were under great pressure from the Communists, and the Prime Minister should not say that the people of New Zealand wanted to recognise their aggressor.[7] Holyoake believed that it was contradictory for New Zealand to be talking of recognising Communist China when it had elements of its armed forces in Asia defending countries against subversion aided and abetted by China.[8] Recognition of mainland China would increase the potential for subversion in Asia by affecting the loyalty of the millions of overseas Chinese who currently saw the Taiwan government as their government. New Zealand could not recognise both Chinas. "These things, are, I think, too lightly put aside by people who talk ... about the recognition of Communist China".

The Leader of the Opposition's appreciation of Taiwan's importance had almost certainly been strengthened by the visit he had made to the island in February of 1960. During this visit, he had had talks with the Nationalist Chinese leader, Chiang Kai-shek.

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[5] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 322, p403, 7 July, 1960

[6] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 322, p331, 6 July, 1960

[7] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 323, p1521, 16 August, 1960

[8] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 322, p593, 14 July, 1960

Holyoake told Parliament that diplomatic recognition of Communist China would commit New Zealand to supporting the Communist government's admission to the United Nations, and its accession to the Chinese seat on the Security Council. China did not measure up to the requirements for membership. The Leader of the Opposition felt that New Zealand should be paying more attention to working in with its friends than to cultivating the enemy.

> "I am positive it is no answer to weaken the Western alliance in its critical hour by making moves ... which seem to me to amount to appeasement. Surely the world has paid dearly enough for moves of appeasement in the past. I believe that this is the time to close our ranks and to do everything we can to strengthen and sustain the countries of South-east Asia, which are doing their best to resist Communism".

and later he said:

> "in the name of Common sense, let us strengthen our alliances with our friends and allies instead of continually talking of appeasing those who are not so friendly to us";[9]

Addressing a large gathering of voters at Dannevirke on July 19, 1960, Holyoake said that he believed that Foreign Affairs would play a major part in the forthcoming election campaign. There was a definite cleavage between the two parties in this area, he said.

> "I have violently disagreed with Labour's views. They have lost their sense of proportion in the matter of our allegiances in the world".[10]

In Holyoake's eyes, the Labour government had overstepped the bounds of alliance loyalty in its desire to reach out to China. New Zealand should stay firmly on its own side of the fence.

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[9] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 322, pp594-596, 14 July, 1960

[10] *O.D.T.* July 20, 1960, p10

The Opposition leader was wrong in his assumption that foreign affairs would play a major part in the 1960 election campaign. As in most New Zealand elections, foreign affairs were not an issue.[11]

The National Party preferred, in the event, to concentrate on Labour's economic record, particularly high taxation, which it evidently believed was more likely to strike a productive chord with the voters. The belief was borne out in the comfortable National victory on November 26. The party gained seven seats to win with a majority of twelve.

In the new government, Holyoake took the portfolio of External Affairs as well as the Prime Ministership. With a National party government, it could have been expected that the China issue would become dormant. In the United States, however, there was a new Democratic administration, and the possibility existed that there might be a change in American China policy. Holyoake addressed himself to this possibility first when he spoke on the issue in the House in July, 1961.

> "... it is difficult for me to see how, in the face of China's continued denunciation of the United States of America, and the unremitting efforts of the Communist government of the mainland of China to weaken, destroy or drive out the whole of the influence of the United States on the Asian continent, President Kennedy can be led to any early or ready decision to welcome her into the United Nations or to recognise her diplomatically".[12]

The New Zealand Prime Minister thus disposed of any hope that the primary obstacle to a New Zealand policy change was going to be removed. Holyoake moved on to other obstacles. Difficult questions

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[11] Chapman, Jackson and Mitchell "*New Zealand Politics in Action*", p104

[12] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 326, p219, 4 July, 1961

of principle had to be solved before Communist China could be admitted to the United Nations. The most important of these, Holyoake said, was the future of the people of the Republic of China on Formosa.

> "Surely no one will suggest that at any time, against their wishes, we should hand them over to the tender mercies of the Peking regime".

Holyoake was making a presumption that admission to the United Nations of Communist China would result in a handing over of Formosa to Peking. The Prime Minister did not, apparently, object to a two-China solution in principle. The problem was only that it was impractical.

> "I know there is talk of two Chinas. I discussed this with President Chiang Kai-shek and his advisers some time ago when I visited the East .. and also with Mr Kennedy recently ... neither the Peking regime nor Chiang Kai-shek will accept the two-China proposition".

The other question of principle was Communist China's fealty to the principles of the United Nations Charter.

> "In addition, the continued aggressive conduct of the Peking regime of Communist China in Tibet and on the Indian border ... arouse very grave doubts, at least in my mind, concerning its readiness to abide by the United Nations Charter. In these circumstances ... I see no reason to hasten Communist China's admission to the United Nations, and it will meantime remain the policy of this government to support the government of the Republic of China".[13]

The following month, August, the government demonstrated that support by raising the level of relations between New Zealand and Nationalist China from the consular to the diplomatic level.[14] Although New Zealand would continue to be unrepresented on Formosa, or Taiwan, the Republic of China would establish an embassy in Wellington. This move was probably the result of Holyoake's trip to Taiwan the previous year, and his appreciation of the Republic of China as a solidly

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[13] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 326, p219, 4 July, 1961

[14] *E.A.R.* August, 1961, p20

established, economically prosperous state. In the 'fifties, the image of the Republican government had been that of a discredited remnant associated with the loss of the mainland, and propped up with American money. By 1961, the Republic of China could be seen as a viable sovereign state, responsible for considerable economic reform and progress. The New Zealand government's decision to establish full diplomatic relations with the Republic of China did not rest on any economic relationship. In 1961, New Zealand's trade with Taiwan was statistically non-existent,[15] while exports to the People's Republic were valued at 1.3 million New Zealand pounds ($2.6 million).

Despite the reaffirming of support for Taiwan and the declaration that China's admission to the United Nations need not be hastened, it was the New Zealand government which brought forward an item to consider the question of Chinese representation at the 1961 session of the General Assembly that October.

This apparent paradox is easily explained. The item was not an initiative on New Zealand's part, but the collective reaction of the Western allies to the expected appearance of a Soviet resolution to seat Communist China at Taiwan's expense. The New Zealand-presented resolution was not the result of a desire to find an answer to the Chinese representation question, but a means of heading off the passage of the Soviet resolution.

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[15] Appendix I, *Annual Report of the Department of Industries and Commerce 1964*, p62 (AJHR H-44)

In September, it was announced that the government had instructed its United Nations mission to propose the inclusion on the agenda of the General Assembly of an item to discuss Chinese representation. The explanation offered by the Department of External Affairs was that over the years there had been clear signs of a growing desire by member states to undertake a full discussion of the issue.[16]

The real reason for New Zealand's action, however, was contained in a statement by Prime Minister Holyoake on September 17. He said:

> "The representation of China is a serious issue. If the General Assembly were to deal with the matter without the most careful and deliberate consideration, the very stability of the United Nations could be imperilled".[17]

In Holyoake's eyes, there was a risk that the Assembly would deal with the issue without careful and deliberate consideration - that is, the members would vote for the Soviet resolution and Taiwan would be out, as well as Communist China being in. The entry of Communist China could well have undesirable consequences for the United Nations, such as the exit of the United States. The New Zealand representative to the United Nations, when urging the inscription of the item on the agenda, noted that the issue "has profoundly affected, and continues to affect, relations ... within the domestic political life of important member states".[18] To remove the risk of precipitate action, New Zealand would counter the Soviet resolution with a proposal for discussion without suggesting any solutions. In the course of the discussion, the Western allies could impress upon members the disadvantages of admitting China.

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[16] *E.A.R.* September, 1961, p27

[17] *E.A.R.* September, 1961, p28

[18] *E.A.R.* April. 1962, p9

From 1951, the United States had annually put forward a motion to defer consideration of the question of Chinese representation, and had had it passed. However, as the New Zealand government had noted, a growing number of nations were chafing at the moratorium on consideration of the issue, and it seemed unlikely that the American motion would pass again. Aware of this, the Americans decided to shift course and encourage discussion as a safety valve that would keep votes away from extreme solutions.[19] Albinski says that the United States tried to collect several of its allies to sponsor the opening up of the China question, and all but New Zealand hesitated to do so.[20] An account of New Zealand's activity on the issue published by the Department of External Affairs confirms that New Zealand's 'initiative' was decided upon in consultation with other countries:

> "In 1961 ... the decision to abandon the moratorium meant that it was of particular importance to those who wished the question to be thoroughly examined and debated that they should retain the initiative and be in the best possible position to defeat any attempts to force the Assembly into an ill-considered and hasty decision. *With this objective in mind*, New Zealand, *in consultation with other governments which shared this view*, proposed a comprehensive discussion of the whole question of Chinese representation".[21]

Britain was one of the countries which was keen for the issue to be discussed. Since 1951, despite its diplomatic recognition of Peking, Britain had gone along with the American moratorium resolution. In early 1961, however, the Foreign Secretary, Lord Home, declared that international life required that Communist China be seated in the United Nations.[22] Britain was reluctant to see Taiwan expelled from the United Nations though, and tried to amend the Soviet resolution to this end. The British representative proposed a simple resolution

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[19] Albinski, H.S. *Australian Attitudes and Policies Towards China* p438

[20] Ibid.

[21] *E.A.R.* April, 1962, p8; emphasis added.

[22] Ibid. p7

that Peking be admitted, without reference to Taiwan.

New Zealand did not vote for this amendment, showing that at this stage the government was not interested in a two-China solution. New Zealand wanted to keep Communist China out. The British amendment was defeated, and subsequently Britain voted for the unamended Soviet resolution.

During the debate in December, New Zealand's United Nations representative, F.H. Corner, condemned the Soviet resolution for calling for "an impossibly simple solution to the problem". He told the Assembly that in dealing with the question careful thought had to be given to the provisions of the Charter; to the effects of any such decision on the United Nations, and to the consequences of any decision on the peace and stability of the Far East.

A decision had to be based on the best possible balance between morality and realism, he said. The Assembly was well aware of the moral issues which had to be faced when deciding what action would be taken on the China items. The principles of the Charter had been related to the events in Korea and the situation in Tibet by many speakers.

> "My government, for its part, has strong views upon these moral elements of the problem and will urge that they be part of any decision .... a solution of this great problem which ignores the moral elements, ignores the principles and purposes of the Charter, will destroy this Organisation and undermine peace".[23]

The New Zealand representative then said that one aspect of reality stood out above all others. It was that the Assembly could not contemplate action which could have vastly more serious consequences than the problem which it set out to solve. The Soviet delegate had

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[23] *E.A.R.* December, 1961, p30

stated that the Chinese Communists had the right to liquidate the Chiang Kai-shek government by any means they saw fit since the problem was an internal matter of China. Corner said that the Soviet representative

> "implied, if he did not say, that the Assembly, by seating the representatives of the Communist government and expelling those who now sit in this hall, would set the world seal of approval on this bellicose thesis. It seems an inescapable conclusion that by adopting the Soviet resolution the Assembly would be represented as agreeing that the People's Republic of China had every right to attempt the conquest of Formosa by force of arms".

An attempt to conquer Formosa would lead to a large-scale war in view of Formosa's defence treaty with the United States and China's with the Soviet Union. Denying Peking representation preserved Taiwan's international position and thus averted war.

New Zealand was "conscious of the desire to ensure more direct representation of 650 million of the most industrious and intelligent people in the world", Corner said. He did not say that New Zealand shared the desire, although he admitted: "We desperately want progress on disarmament, which is unlikely to occur in present circumstances". Despite the 'consciousness',

> "New Zealand .. has no intention of abandoning the Government of the Republic of China with which we are in friendly diplomatic relations".

New Zealand believed that the debate should be followed by the Assembly's providing "some means" to further examine the problem. New Zealand had no ready-made solution to propose, Corner said.

At the end of the debate, the Assembly rejected the Soviet resolution, and accepted an American one that required future proposals to change Chinese representation to obtain a two-thirds majority.

In the following years, concern for Taiwan's position replaced loyalty to American alliance as the publicly expressed fundamental constraint on New Zealand's acceptance of China diplomatically and at the United Nations. This change in the public justification for China policy may have been due to a change in what was perceived to be politically acceptable among an audience that was becoming more sophisticated in the foreign affairs field. It came at a time when New Zealand's oldest ally, Britain, had shocked the nation by announcing a policy that seemed likely to have a very detrimental effect on New Zealand's economic position: the policy of entering the European Economic Community. Britain's membership of this body would inevitably mean the end of New Zealand's position as a major supplier of the British food market. It is possible that this event was the one that prompted a de-emphasising of the virtues of loyalty to an ally. Paradoxically, the threat to New Zealand posed by Britain's entry into the Community meant that New Zealand needed its allies, the United States and Australia, more than ever as alternative markets. In 1960, the United States was New Zealand's second largest market for exports, providing 13.10 percent of its export income (Britain provided 53.0 percent). Australia was New Zealand's fourth most valuable market, although taking only 4.46 percent of New Zealand's exports (France was third that year with 6.73 percent).[24] Politically, however, support for the interests of other small nations could have seemed more appropriate as a policy justification than loyalty to a Great Power.

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[24] Direction of New Zealand Exports, Appendix I, *Annual Report of the Department of Industries and Commerce* 1961, p66

In 1961 the government gave the appearance of being primarily concerned, in its China policy at the United Nations, with protecting Taiwan's United Nations membership, rather than blocking Peking's entry for its own sake. Taiwan's right to a separate existence seemed to be New Zealand's foremost principle, and it was believed that this right would be enhanced by continued United Nations membership. The merits or otherwise of Peking's membership were secondary while Peking insisted that its entry could only be achieved at the price of Taiwan's exit. New Zealand saw the Republic of China as a separate state, and because it was a small state and a friendly one, the New Zealand government was prepared to stand up for what it believed were Taiwan's rights. In 1963 the Prime Minister was to claim that New Zealand, as a small power, had always been vigilant concerning the treatment of small states, and was particularly insistent on the rights of small states to have access to the processes of settlement of the United Nations.[25] The fact that the United States insisted that the Taiwan government was the only legitimate government of China, was, however, undoubtedly a powerful stimulus to the upholding of Taiwan's rights.

Apart from preserving the existence and status of the government of Taiwan, New Zealand had indicated that in considering the Chinese representation question it was concerned with the People's Republic's adherence to the principles of the Charter. The early 'sixties did not help China's reputation in the Western world. The Himalayan war with India was a further heavy count against China because New Zealand, along with its mentors, held China to be the guilty party.

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[25] *E.A.R.* August, 1963, p20

The war had its origin in the dispute over the border between India and China that had been going on since 1958. China claimed that the border had never been properly delimited, while India declared that its map claims were the legal alignments. Each side moved to occupy the areas claimed by it. In late 1962 Indian forces moved beyond the British-established border, the McMahon line, and came face to face with the Chinese army. Skirmishing occurred. In early October, Nehru said that the Army had been given instructions to expel the Chinese from Indian-claimed territory.[26] On October 20, the Chinese attacked the Indians in force, and for the next month advanced to their own territorial claim line.

New Zealand chose to interpret the border crisis as the result of acts of aggression by China. The picture of peaceful India, champion of non-violence and negotiation, was contrasted with that of provocative and aggressive China. In his first statement on the Sino-Indian War, Holyoake said:

> "New Zealand cannot fail to be concerned over the acts of aggression committed by Communist China against a fellow member of the Commonwealth ... We all, I am sure, have full sympathy with the government and people of India in the present crisis ...
>
> In the area where fighting has occurred, the New Zealand government recognises the traditional boundaries of India, and we have admired the remarkable restraint exercised by India in the face of continual Chinese provocation and encroachment. The Chinese, on the other hand, have shown by their actions how little store the government in Peking sets upon the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, which in company with India, it proclaimed only eight years ago".[27]

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[26] Maxwell, N. *India's China War*, p342

[27] *External Affairs Review (E.A.R.)* October, 1962, p39

New Zealand followed up her verbal support of India with some concrete assistance, in the form of army blankets and butterfat to the value of ten thousand pounds. The Prime Minister commented that New Zealand was not in a position to provide modern military equipment, but the government "wanted to help India in the present crisis".[28]

At the United Nations General Assembly on October 26, 1962, Corner said that the aggressive acts of Chinese forces along the Indian border inevitably heightened New Zealand's doubts "about the present willingness of the Government of the People's Republic to accept the obligations, or the essential spirit, of the United Nations Charter".[29]

A year later, it was still China's India policy that Holyoake quoted as a reason for denying China admission. Asked by a Labour member, W.W. Freer, in October, 1963, whether he would instruct New Zealand's representative to vote for the admission of China that year, Holyoake said:

> "In the light of Communist China's conduct over the last year, particularly its brutal attacks on India last October and November, and its vicious assault on the partial nuclear test ban treaty recently, the government does not believe there should be any change in the position".[30]

Nineteen sixty-three saw the prophets of 1950 borne out in the shape of a public split between China and the Soviet Union. However, the split did not take the shape hoped for by the optimists of a decade before. Instead of a moderate China breaking with Soviet

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[28] *E.A.R.* November, 1962, p23

[29] *E.A.R.* November, 1962, p54

[30] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 337, 16 October, 1963, p2490

goals, a radical China was breaking with the Soviet Union for not pursuing those goals in the most aggressive manner. The Sino-Soviet dispute thus seemed to most Western nations to offer little scope for improved relations with China. As a consequence of the dispute, the Soviet Union stopped introducing the annual resolution in the United Nations to admit Peking and expel Taiwan, and from the 1963 session, left the task to Albania. For the next eight years, it was to be the Albanian resolution that the United States and New Zealand would argue against.

One Western nation did see the changing relationship between the Soviet Union and China, and that between the Soviet Union and the West, as justifying moves towards China. In January, 1964, France granted diplomatic recognition to China, the first Western nation to do so in a decade.

Unlike the United States and New Zealand, France had no vital interests to protect in the Far East and there were no conflicts between it and China.[31] Thus, once China had shown itself independent of Russian policy, there was no reason for France not to recognise it. The French government considered it unrealistic to ignore the existence of a rising power with a growing influence in Asia.

De Gaulle and his Cabinet believed that no Asian problem, including the Indo-China conflict, could be solved without China's cooperation, and recognition was designed to facilitate the advancement of the French plan to neutralise South-east Asia. Neutralisation was seen as serving both legitimate Chinese interests in South-east

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[31]Kulski, W.W. *De Gaulle and the World - The Foreign Policy of the Fifth French Republic* p314

Asia, and French interest in reestablishing its influence in an area from which it had been ousted by the United States.

Neither the United States or New Zealand favoured neutralisation because they were not prepared to accommodate any Chinese interests in South-east Asia. When asked to comment on the French recognition, New Zealand Prime Minister Holyoake made it clear that New Zealand would continue not to recognise, and that China's international behaviour, in South-east Asia and elsewhere, was the primary consideration in this decision. Taiwan's position was mentioned only secondarily.

> "Though the time may come when the recognition of Communist China should be considered, its actions and policies up to the present have not provided any demonstration that persuades the New Zealand government that we should depart from the attitude of previous New Zealand governments on this issue. Our attitude has never been an inflexible one, but we must have a consistent regard for both principles and facts".[32]

The Prime Minister went on to claim that New Zealand's policy of non-recognition had been based since 1949 on this country's disapproval of China's international behaviour.

> "Since the establishment of the Communist government in 1949, successive New Zealand governments have felt that the behaviour of the Peking regime gave no indication that it was willing to accept the normal standards of international behaviour".

This behaviour consisted of "pressure on its neighbours, including its aggressive attacks on India in 1959 and 1962", and "subversive activity" which was a continuing threat to the independence of all the countries of the Far East.

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32 Statements by Ministers of the Crown 1964, p16

Holyoake even cited China's refusal to sign the Nuclear test-ban treaty as evidence of her unworthiness.

It was only after the recitation of China's misdeeds that the Prime Minister made mention of Taiwan as a constraint.

> "Moreover, successive New Zealand governments have been unwilling to accept the claim of Peking to establish, by force if necessary, its rule over Taiwan. We have not been willing to sacrifice the people of Taiwan, in the absence of the expression of any wish on their part, to come within the domination of the Communist regime".

The Prime Minister laid down a stringent set of conditions for the admission of Peking to the comity of nations.

> "Were there any indication that the Peking government was prepared to conduct itself properly, to modify its claims to Taiwan, and to demonstrate its willingness to work for international peace, or if there were some other significant change in the situation, we would be willing to review the situation".

Diplomatic recognition of Communist China would not, in fact, have necessarily involved an acknowledgement of China's claim to Taiwan. The French recognition had not included any reference to China's claim.

The French government publicly indicated that it did not regard its recognition of the People's Republic as precluding a continuing recognition of the Chinese administration on Taiwan, and the fact that the French were able to say this shows that the Chinese Communists had not insisted on France's adopting a one-China policy as the price for diplomatic relations.

In a statement to the Foreign Affairs Commission of the French National Assembly on January 2, 1964, the French Foreign Minister stressed that the decision to recognise had been "without conditions", and that France would not take any initiative in breaking off her

existing diplomatic relations with the Chinese Nationalists in Formosa.[33]

It was Nationalist China that severed relations with France, and it did this on February 10, thirteen days after the French recognition.

New Zealand's government, however, believed that any recognition of Peking would *implicitly* endorse the Communist claim to Taiwan. Thus, logically, Peking could not be recognised until the claim to Taiwan was dropped, or at least a disclaimer of the use of force to assert the claim was made, or until Peking recognised the existence of the Nationalist government. It was not standard practice for diplomatic recognition to involve acknowledgement of a country's territorial claims, so New Zealand could not really be accused of prejudicing Taiwan's future by recognising China.

In his immediate comment on the French recognition, Holyoake had not mentioned the American attitude as an influential factor on New Zealand's policy, but he included it when he discussed the recognition question in his introduction to the 1964 Annual report of the Department of External Affairs. The Minister of External Affairs said that he proposed to keep New Zealand's position under review,

> "Taking special note of Communist China's conduct *and of the attitudes of friendly governments*".[34]

The United States, of course, was the foremost friendly government and it had made it very clear that it disapproved of the French recognition. A State Department release of January 27, 1964, admitted

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[33] *Keesing's Archives* February 1-8, 1964, p19877

[34] *Annual Report of the Department of External Affairs* 1964, p4 emphasis added

that pressure had been applied to the French.

> "We have repeatedly expressed to the Government of France our reasons why we consider this would be an unfortunate step, particularly at a time when the Chinese Communists are actively promoting aggression and subversion in South-east Asia and elsewhere".[35]

If New Zealand had been of a mind to do the same as France, the same pressure would have been applied, but with better results. The government of General de Gaulle believed that in an era of increasing detente with the Soviet Union in Europe, France was less dependent on the United States and could and should develop an independent role on the international scene. Since the United States regarded solidarity on the China issue as an indicator of alliance loyalty, the French recognition was, in part, a deliberate move to emphasise French independence from American policy.[36] New Zealand, on the other hand, feeling more vulnerable than France, was eager to strengthen the alliance with the United States, and was constrained in its China policy.

At the next ANZUS meeting, in July, 1964, the Americans were concerned to recommit their smaller allies to a non-recognition policy. The ANZUS Council reaffirmed its 1953 decision not to grant recognition or United Nations admission to China, although this was not mentioned in the communique.[37]

The United States government under the Johnson administration continued to believe that the grant of recognition by Western states would only encourage the Chinese to persist in their militancy. The

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[35] *Department of State Bulletin* February 17, 1964, p260

[36] See Fejto, F. "France and China - The Intersection of Two Grand Designs", in Halpern, A.M. *Policies Toward China - Views from Six Continents*, esp. pp42-43 and 57-58

[37] Starke, J.G. *The Anzus Treaty Alliance*, p241

policy of assertiveness would be seen by the Communists to be paying appeasement dividends. At a press conference in February, 1964, Secretary of State Rusk said:

> "I think that the problem of French recognition of Peiping [sic] is only a portion of what to me is the central problem and that is whether the authorities in Peiping are going to be led to believe that their policy of militancy will pay dividends".[38]

Even without the American attitude, there were plenty of other friendly governments with negative attitudes. In 1960 Holyoake had declared that New Zealand should take account of South-east Asian government attitudes, and now in 1964 the public stances of the South-east Asian members of SEATO were against recognition.

On January 28, the Foreign Minister of the Philippines stated that five days previously President Macapagal had asked General de Gaulle not to recognise Peking and thereby "let down the many nations in Asia which are the actual or potential objects of subversion and attack by Communist China".[39]

Australia's Minister of External Affairs, Barwick, said that Peking's attitude on "a number of crucial issues" was the principal impediment to its wider acceptance into the international community, and that no change in Australian policy in respect of recognition was desirable.[40]

Apart from objecting in principle to China's general international behaviour, New Zealand objected particularly to China's actions in South-east Asia which it saw as a direct threat to its

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[38] *Department of State Bulletin*, February 24, 1964, p284. "Peiping" is the name by which the Nationalist Chinese call Peking.

[39] *Waikato Times*, January 28, 1964, p1

[40] *Current Notes on International Affairs*, January, 1964, p69

interests. While China continued to threaten New Zealand's interests it could not be recognised. The New Zealand government believed that its security was linked to a stable, non-Communist, independent South-east Asia, and that China threatened that state of affairs because it wanted to dominate South-east Asia. Prime Minister Holyoake outlined the case against China in the House of Representatives in August, 1964. The Chinese Communists, he said, were "obsessed with the need for violence and revolution". They had said that the existing free, democratic countries had to be overthrown by armed revolution. "They are quite clear about it ... they argue that local wars must be provoked". Holyoake said that it was a doctrine that could not possibly mean peace in South-east Asia. He went on to cite China's record of "continuous aggression" since 1949, mentioning constant Chinese support for renewed attacks in Laos and South Vietnam in recent years, and China's support for Indonesia's Confrontation policy. "The point I am making is that this is the threat which faces South-east Asia today - a policy of armed insurgence, violence ... I say it must not be allowed to succeed".[41]

In December, 1965, at the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Conference, the Prime Minister told delegates that Communist China posed the chief threat to world peace by its attempt to take over the countries of South-east Asia. New Zealand's aim was to see a world in which national identity was respected, he said, but Communist China was trying to deny the national identity of South-east Asian states.

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[41] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 339, p1658, 27 August, 1964

> "As we see it, China has passed through a century of weakness, but is now embarking apparently upon a period of strength, and is apparently determined to restore its domination and suzerainty over the countries which it enjoyed domination and suzerainty over in past centuries. This, in our view, is a demonstration of the new imperialism".[42]

It was not a time for conciliation, but for resistance. In May, 1965, New Zealand soldiers joined American troops in what was seen as the military containment of China in South Vietnam. New Zealand and American military involvement in Indo-China put a constraint on moves towards China, as the Korean War had done. At the same time, it inevitably gave New Zealand, which feared an escalation of the war to involve China directly, an incentive to bring China into the international comity to achieve peace.

The first signs of a more positive attitude towards China's entry to the United Nations - at least in words, if not deeds - did not come immediately. In reply to a Labour question in July 1965 about Communist China and the United Nations, the Prime Minister said:

> "When Communist China behaves herself in a normal fashion, when Communist China agrees to settle international disputes by peaceful means, instead of by revolution as she proposes to do ... and when Communist China says, 'Yes, we will consider the question of the two Chinas', then the attitude of this government will change".[43]

Two months later, when the Indo-Pakistani War broke out, and China sent a warning to India on Pakistan's behalf, the Prime Minister used the fact to justify China's continuing exclusion from the United Nations. The Chinese ultimatum was "another example of the threatening, bellicose

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[42] *E.A.R.* December, 1965, p33

[43] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 343, p1300, 14 July, 1965

and bullying attitude of Communist China", and it was

> "further proof and justification for the view that Communist China is not yet ready or qualified for membership of an organisation the central objective of which is to settle disputes between nations by peaceful means".[44]

In November, however, in front of an international audience at the United Nations, the New Zealand representative was more inclined to see a place for China in that body. The obstacle was Taiwan, rather than China's international behaviour. F.H. Corner told the Assembly that New Zealand recognised the force of many of the arguments in favour of Peking's participation, but the difficult part was the price of Peking's admission. If the Assembly were to act in conformity with the Charter, it could not subscribe to the notion that the fate of the island of Taiwan was of no concern to the international community. That would be to make a mockery of all that was said about self-determination. Corner now declared that New Zealand did not want to see Communist China proscribed.

> "We look forward to some acceptable opening up of the present impasse which would enable Peking to participate in the work of the United Nations".[45]

The next year saw an upsurge of public interest in the United States in China policy. The Senate began to hold public hearings on the issue, and the Secretary of State delivered a general review and projection of American dealings with China to a subcommittee of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives on March 16. Rusk reiterated that the United States must take care to do nothing which would encourage Peking to believe that it could reap

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[44] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 344, p3176, 1 October, 1965

[45] *E.A.R.* November, 1965, p26

gains from its aggressive actions and designs, but it would continue to make plain that if Peking abandoned its violent strategy the United States would welcome an era of good relations.[46] The Secretary then set forth elements of future policy towards China. In the course of these, he said: "So long as Peiping follows its present course it is extremely difficult for us to see how it can be held to fulfill the requirements set forth in the Charter for membership, and the United States opposes its membership". Rusk said, however, that the United States would continue to enlarge the possibilities for unofficial contacts between China and the United States. Contact and communication were not incompatible with a firm policy of containment.

When Holyoake next commented in Parliament on New Zealand's attitude to the recognition of Communist China and its admittance to the United Nations, in June, 1966, he did not say that New Zealand wanted to see China in the United Nations. The Prime Minister made the old point that China was continuing policies that constituted a serious threat to world peace and security, as well as to the objectives of the United Nations. He went on to say:

> "There is no doubt that Communist China's voice must be heard and its legitimate concerns taken into account in any major international negotiations. For that reason, the government has supported the proposal for a world disarmament conference in which it was envisaged that Communist China would participate, and we have also supported a proposal that Communist China should be included in discussion on any negotiations on peace in Vietnam".[47]

That was as far as the Prime Minister was prepared to go. Nineteen sixty-six was an election year, and the government was making its Vietnam policy an issue at the polls. Since a major justification for that policy was the need to check the spread of Chinese influence,

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[46] MacFarquhar, R. (ed.) *Sino-American Relations 1949-1971* p223

[47] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 346, p222, 7 June, 1966

there could be no concessions to China. At the United Nations General Assembly session in November, 1966, however, New Zealand revealed an interest in including China in the world body by its involvement in the putting forward of a proposal to set up a committee to study the issue of Chinese representation. Prime Minister Holyoake described the move, initiated by Italy, Belgium and some South American nations, as "sensible and practical",[48] and said that on his instructions, the New Zealand mission had been playing an active role in discussions which led to the tabling of the new resolution. It is notable that Australia did not support this initiative, and voted against it.[49] The United States, however, did support it. The motion did not pass.

It seemed that while the Australian government was staying with the purely moral-ideological stance that both ANZAC governments had adopted hitherto, New Zealand was prepared to shift ground slightly in the direction of pragmatism. In doing so, it was not going beyond the American position.

New Zealand's United Nations representative Corner told the General Assembly that New Zealand's approach to the China representation question was that there existed a series of concrete political realities that had to be, in effect, balanced out. The existence and nuclear power of Communist China had to be balanced against its policies and doctrines, and against the existence of the Republic of China. Corner said that the proposal to establish a committee to study the question

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[48] *E.A.R.* November, 1966, p19

[49] Greenwood, A. and Harper, N. "*Australia In World Affairs 1966-70* p210

of Chinese representation recognised that a solution to the problem would have to be consistent with the principles of the Charter as well as the aim of universality.

He did not expect the committee to come up with a readily acceptable solution, since

> "The basic problem will remain: that the Peking government has espoused doctrines that are dangerous to world peace and security and has imposed conditions upon its associations with this body that are unacceptable".

The New Zealand delegate was thus saying that China's entry to the United Nations should still be conditional on acceptable behaviour. The weight of China's policies was still enough in New Zealand's eyes to offset her compelling claims to membership. Although the onset of the Cultural Revolution in China seemed "to betoken more rather than less intransigence and a greater rather than a lesser determination to reject the world and .. to deny Communist China's responsibilities", Corner said that New Zealand did not foreclose the possibility of useful results from the study committee. The Assembly had to face up to its responsibilities in an issue of this importance, "whatever we may think of the likelihood that the Peking government will face up to theirs".[50] In other words, it was important that an effort be made to formulate a fair solution.

Corner went on to extend the point Holyoake had made in June: China's voice had to be heard, not only where its interests were directly affected, but in all major international negotiations. He related this directly to the United Nations, which Holyoake had not.

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[50] *E.A.R.* November, 1966, p35

> "We accept that ... the right of China to be a party to negotiations that affect its legitimate interests - is relevant to the situation in the United Nations".

Accordingly, New Zealand was prepared to give "serious consideration" to any proposal aimed at seating Communist China in the United Nations, provided this was not brought about at the expense of the Republic of China or in a manner that would jeopardise the right of the people of Taiwan to a voice in their future.

At this stage, a proposal to seat China would receive only "serious consideration", not necessarily support. China's right to participate in international discussions, and the value of her doing so, were not overriding factors, but just elements in the balance.

For all that New Zealand seemed to be prepared to see China in the United Nations as an aid to international negotiations, the government had more reservations about granting diplomatic recognition to China. Whereas United Nations membership could be seen as a necessary evil - a realistic bowing to the facts of power to help ensure peace - diplomatic recognition could be seen much more as a mark of approval. Holyoake came back from the SEATO Council meeting of 1966 saying, in effect, that there could be no conciliatory moves until Chinese ambitions had been frustrated: the priority was for resisting China, and only when the clash of influences in South-east Asia had been resolved (that is, when the Vietnam War had been won, and China changed its tactics) could there be moves towards co-existence. The Prime Minister stated that the SEATO countries should in the long-term work towards living peacefully with Communist China, but that currently it was essential to resist the Chinese pressure being felt everywhere in Asia.[51]

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[51] *O.D.T.* June 29, 1966, p6

The impression conveyed by the Prime Minister that a relationship with China could not be inaugurated until there had been changes in China's South-east Asian policies was somewhat overshadowed in these years by his frequent reference to Taiwan as the major constraint on New Zealand's recognition of China.

In May, 1967, Holyoake indicated that he saw the Taiwan issue as the basic impediment to the recognition of China by New Zealand. Requested by one of his own backbenchers in Parliament for an assurance that, in considering the recognition question, the government would give due weight to the right of the people of Taiwan to determine their own future, Holyoake gave it.

> "I have always believed that a just and reasonable settlement of this problem must safeguard the rights of the 13,000,000 people of Formosa to determine their own future. That is why I am not prepared to recommend that New Zealand should extend formal recognition to Communist China. *That is the outstanding obstacle*".[52]

The Prime Minister went on to insist that granting recognition in the current circumstances would mean withdrawing recognition from the Republic of China and "acknowledging Communist China's authority over Formosa".

Holyoake's linking of these two factors reiterated the apparent belief of the government that the first would lead to the second. Both Britain and France recognised Peking without acknowledging Peking's authority over Formosa. Britain, indeed, had explicitly stated that it regarded Taiwan's status as undetermined. New Zealand however, was committed to the continuing recognition of the Republic of China as the only means of guaranteeing Taiwan's right to remain

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[52] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 350, p795, 24 May, 1967 emphasis added

non-Communist. When the New Zealand government spoke of trying to preserve Taiwan's right to self-determination, it meant the Republic of China's right to exist as an entity separate from the People's Republic. It did not mean the right of the people of Taiwan to choose their own government - be it the Republic of China, the People's Republic, or some non-Chinese alternative. New Zealand presumed that the Republic of China government was truly representative of the wishes of the Taiwanese. Britain, on the other hand, did not. Britain upheld the right of the Taiwanese people to choose their own government, but it did not recognise the Republic of China as either the government of mainland China or of Taiwan.

New Zealand wanted to pursue a two-Chinas policy, but since this was not acceptable to the parties involved, the government preferred to recognise the friendly China rather than the unfriendly regime. The question was not the objective one of which represented China, but of what was necessary to continue to support the government of Taiwan. This could only be done by diplomatic recognition of it as the government of all China.

For all its professed concern for demonstrating support for the separate regime on Taiwan, the government did not see the establishment of an embassy on the island as a matter of high priority, or even of necessity. In July, 1966, the Holt government in Australia underlined its support for the Nationalists on Taiwan by establishing a diplomatic post on the island. The Holyoake government did not follow suit. In reply to a suggestion - ironically advanced by former Leader of the Opposition Nordmeyer - that New Zealand should send an ambassador to Taipei, the Prime Minister said that New Zealand's diplomatic resources were stretched to the limit as it was, and that besides, the existing arrangement was quite adequate.

> "A very satisfactory channel of communication exists between the two governments, so that no practical difficulties arise from the absence of a New Zealand representative in Taipeh".[53]

The satisfactory channel was the Chinese Embassy in Wellington. The recent establishment of two posts in Europe, at Bonn and Rome, had been responsible for the straining of the Department of External Affairs' resources: these posts had obviously been thought more important to New Zealand's interests than one in the Taiwanese capital. New Zealand, in the wake of Britain's announced interest in joining the European Economic Community, was giving high priority to improving relations with EEC nations in order to keep access to the British market. Taiwan had, by comparison, no economic significance for New Zealand.

Holyoake commented that he thought the suggestion of establishing a post was "an indication of the growing acceptance of the important role in Asian affairs which the Government of the Republic of China has to play".

New Zealand had, in the previous month, become politically associated with Taiwan in the Asian and Pacific Council, a body designed to promote closer political and economic relations among the anti-Communist nations of East Asia. As well as Taiwan and New Zealand, the members were South Korea, South Vietnam, Thailand, the Philippines, Japan, Malaysia and Australia. Australia's decision to establish an ambassador in Taipei was partly prompted by this new relationship with Taiwan.

Although Holyoake claimed that the relationship between Nationalist China and New Zealand did not need a New Zealand representative in Taipei

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[53] *E.A.R.* July, 1966, p25

to be fruitful, in political terms the sending of an ambassador would have demonstrated very vividly the commitment New Zealand claimed to the Taiwan government. The Australian government felt the need to make this demonstration, but New Zealand's did not.

By 1967, the Prime Minister, when he spoke against China's international behaviour, was talking also of the desirability of making moves to encourage change in China's attitudes. In South Korea in January, Holyoake averred that the "menace of Communist Chinese expansion" still threatened the peace and security of the Asian-Pacific region. He accused the Chinese of attempting to hamper the peaceful economic and social progress to which the free countries of Asia were dedicated, by "constant propaganda and material support of so-called liberation fronts".[54] The Prime Minister appeared, however, to have had second thoughts about the best way of dealing with the recalcitrant giant.

> "We have to face the fact that the regime in Peking is in effective control over the most populous nation in the world. It is no answer to merely isolate it".

This attitude marked a definite change from the pre-1965 period, when the policy seemed to be based on just such an answer. Holyoake continued:

> "We must, of course, remain ready to contain aggression wherever it may threaten to take place ... At the same time, however, we must strive towards a greater and more constructive goal, namely, that the true voice of the Chinese people will once more be heard and welcomed in the councils of the world".

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[54] *E.A.R.* January, 1967, p39

In earlier years, the emphasis had been wholely on containment: now, the Prime Minister thought that efforts had to be made to encourage the development of moderate tendencies in the Chinese government, which were the "true" expression of the outlook of the Chinese people. Once that had been done, China could take her rightful place in organs like the United Nations.

Holyoake now admitted that he could see advantages in increasing the contacts between mainland China and the rest of the world,

> "so that all the Chinese people may eventually come to feel that they do, in fact, belong to the brotherhood of the nations of the world. Only by combining firmness with flexibility can we pave the way for an eventual settlement of the problems which at present appear insoluble".

In May, 1967, the Prime Minister stated that he saw continuing New Zealand trade with China as one possible way of modifying Chinese attitudes. After announcing the cessation of the export of tallow to North Vietnam for the duration of the Vietnamese War, Holyoake went on to defend its continuing export to China.

> "The government will ... keep the question of trade in tallow with mainland China under review. Without clearer evidence that this export is of strategic significance, however, the government does not propose to take steps to curtail it. It has always seemed to me that a steady increase in trade between Western countries and mainland China is perhaps one of the more persuasive factors that may eventually convince the Chinese Communist authorities of the desirability of seeking a more normal relationship with the outside world. The government would be very sorry to make any move, without good cause, which might hinder that development".[55]

During the decade, New Zealand exports to China had been rising in value, although the total by 1967 was not significant in terms of New Zealand's total trade. In 1961, New Zealand had exported £1,323,000

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[55] *E.A.R.* May, 1967, p24

($2,646,000) worth of goods to the People's Republic and had taken £434,000 ($868,000) worth of Chinese imports.[56] In 1964, the export trade to China was worth £2,313,000 ($4,626,000) and in 1966, £2,567,000 ($5,134,000).[57] In 1967 it was to jump to $7,696,000, with New Zealand buying $2,945,000 worth of Chinese goods.[58] The 1967 figure represented one percent of the total value of New Zealand's exports that year. At a time when New Zealand was attempting to diversify its markets in response to the threat of Britain's joining the EEC, the government was likely to be hesitant about imperilling trade with a growing customer.

Later in 1967, the Prime Minister went as far as to say that the achievement of a *modus vivendi* with China was a major objective of New Zealand's foreign policy. In answer to a question in Parliament from a member of his own party about government policy towards China, Holyoake said: "All members of this House must recognise that there can be no lasting stability in Asia and the Pacific until a way has been found to live at peace with Communist China. Certainly this government acknowledges that this is a major objective of New Zealand foreign policy".[59]

The Prime Minister was quite ready to acknowledge now that a policy of containment alone was ultimately an unsatisfactory one. He was prepared to give an accommodation with China high ranking on a list of New Zealand foreign policy objectives. Significantly, however, there was no suggestion of a policy initiative to realise

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[56] Appendices I and II, *Annual Report of the Department of Industries and Commerce*, 1964, pp62-63

[57] Appendix I, *A.R.D.I.C.* 1967, p59

[58] Appendix I, *A.R.D.I.C.* 1970, p72; Appendix II, p73

[59] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 351, p1681, 7 July, 1967

that objective. Holyoake thought that the accommodation ball was in China's court, and that China gave no sign of being interested in returning it.

> "I must say .. that at the present time Communist China shows very few signs of desiring or working towards a more normal relationship with any outside country, whether Communist or non-Communist, Asian or otherwise; so it does seem that prospects for an early accommodation with Communist China are not very promising".

New Zealand, then, was prepared to deal with China once China showed signs of wanting to be dealt with, but not before. There would be no moves towards China. Two months later the Prime Minister made the point again when he was asked to comment on a Japanese politician's statement about the necessity for peaceful co-existence with China. Holyoake replied that New Zealand had never wished for anything but peaceful co-existence with China, but to attain that state, efforts had to be made on both sides, "and I do not believe that anything will be achieved until Communist China's aggressive foreign policy is changed".[60]

In the House of Representatives in July, 1968, a new government backbencher, G. Gair, spoke out for the view that China must mend her ways before she could be accepted by any country. Gair challenged the view that China's entry into the United Nations would serve a useful purpose. He said that the proponents of China's entry said that her presence was necessary for international discussions, if for nothing else.

> "I question whether the opportunity to talk is really a vital point; it is more a willingness to discuss, to reason, to listen, to compromise, and to act in good faith ...

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[60] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 352. p3004, 13 September, 1967

> .. The admission of Red China to the United Nations in the present atmosphere and with the present attitude of the Government of Red China would be tantamount to debasing the value of the United Nations. It would be like rewarding a bad boy for his behaviour. In the short-term, China's present attitudes cast a very real shadow upon the Eastern hemisphere, and in fact, upon the whole world".[61]

Gair believed that good behaviour and peaceful intentions should still be the prime prerequisites for China's admission to the United Nations. The western world should continue to play a waiting game until China "matured" by itself.

> " ... in the long-term, I believe ... that the feelings which cause that country to adopt so many unreasonable stands on the international scene today will mellow. As the standard of living in China improves, her attitude towards the world will become more responsible".

That Gair's attitude epitomised that of the government is borne out by the fact that the sentiments were endorsed by New Zealand's United Nations representative in the General Assembly that November. F.H. Corner told the Assembly that New Zealand could not see the issue of Chinese representation as a simple procedural one, but as "a question involving the attitudes of each member of this Assembly towards fundamental issues of peace and security..".[62]

The government continued to see China's attitudes as relevant criteria for admission to the United Nations. In taking this position, however, the government did not deny the continuing need for China'a admission. Corner said that he wished to make it clear that in rejecting the Albanian resolution, the government in no way denied "the need for Communist China's voice to be heard". It was axiomatic to New Zealand, he said, that peace and security could not be established

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[61] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 355, p642, July 19, 1968

[62] *E.A.R.* November 1968, p40

in the area on an enduring basis without the support - or at least the acquiesence - of the Peking government.

Echoing Gair's point, Corner said that the acceptance of Peking's representatives in the United Nations would not, in itself, guarantee that problems such as the peace of Asia would come nearer to solution.

> "Regrettably, we are here considering the case of a government which over the years has not only rejected the accepted norms of domestic and international conduct, but has made of such rejection a philosophy and a way of life".

The representative said that during the year, the New Zealand government had "looked in vain" for any signs that the People's Republic had moderated its attitudes, and he referred specifically to China's encouragement of North Vietnam to reject any prospect of negotiating a settlement to the conflict in Vietnam, and to the continued testing of nuclear weapons in the atmosphere. These "failures of the Communist Chinese government to act as a responsible member of the international community" were "*essential elements*" in New Zealand's consideration of the question.[63]

Taiwan was thus *not* the only obstacle in New Zealand's eyes to China's admittance.

At the same time that Corner was telling the United Nations that there was a second major objection in New Zealand's eyes to Chinese entry, Prime Minister Holyoake, when replying to pressure group demands that the government support China's admission, continued to refer only to the Taiwanese constraint.

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[63] *E.A.R.* November, 1968, pp40-41. Emphasis added

In November, 1968, Holyoake claimed that he had frequently acknowledged the value that would be derived from associating mainland China with the main currents of international activity, including the United Nations. However,

> "the government's position is that it cannot support moves to bring Communist China into the United Nations so long as Communist China and its supporters insist that this can only be done on the basis of denying the right of the Republic of China to continuing representation in the world organisation".[64]

At the end of 1968, then, New Zealand's position with regard to Chinese representation did not differ greatly from that of 1961. The government now acknowledged that China's presence in the United Nations was necessary - something it had not said earlier in the decade - but it continued to hold that China's international behaviour could not be overlooked in any decision, although it did not always say so in public pronouncements. The protection of the Taiwan government's interests had emerged as the most prominent public constraint on New Zealand's China policy.

Conclusion

The return of the National Party to office in 1960 meant a return to an essentially negative policy on China. The determinants of China policy remained the same as in the previous decade, but their order of importance, as avowed by government spokesmen, changed.

In the period of Opposition from 1957 to 1960, the National Party seemed primarily concerned, as it had always been, that moves towards a relationship with the People's Republic of China would strain New Zealand's alliance with the United States. Beyond that,

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[64] *E.A.R.* November, 1968, p27

recognition would convey approval of China's policies in South-east Asia, and a non-interest in the fate of those Asian states resisting Chinese pressure. Finally, recognition would undermine the position of the Taiwan government and thus make Communist subversion of the Chinese minorities in Asia easier. New Zealand's first priority, the party believed, should be the support of its friends rather than conciliation of the enemy.

These attitudes carried over into government in the sixties, but in public there were changes. The concern for the American alliance was now never mentioned. Instead, it was a perceived commitment to the Taiwan government that was increasingly emphasised. The only public clue to the fact that American views were still influential on New Zealand's China policy came indirectly in 1964 when the Prime Minister said that the government would take the attitudes of friendly governments into account in formulating China policy. Yet neither the domestic political environment nor the international environment had changed substantially to account for this. The government was quite prepared to justify its Vietnam commitment in terms of the needs of the American alliance, and the need to toe the line on China policy was almost as compelling under a Democratic administration that was deeply involved in South-east Asia as it had been under a Republican administration guided by Dulles. The Taiwanese people were to be guaranteed the right to self-determination and this could only be done, it was believed, by continuing to recognise their government diplomatically as the government of China. Seemingly, the New Zealand government had convinced itself that a derecognition of the Taiwan government would give Peking a moral and legal *carte blanche* to take over the island. Not only would this be wrong, but it could

lead to international war. Once the government had decided that the regime on Taiwan could not be derecognised, Communist China could not be recognised until it accepted the two-China concept. This the People's Republic had said it would never do.

Throughout the decade, China's international behaviour was used as a justification for New Zealand's non-recognition policy, and its opposition to China's admission to the United Nations. With regard to the United Nations, New Zealand was concerned that China's actions did not square with the principles of the Charter, and insisted until 1968 that fealty to those principles must be as compelling a criterion for entry as any demand of realism or universality. In 1962, the New Zealand delegate in the United Nations said that China's India policy had heightened doubts about China's willingness to accept the principles of the Charter, and in 1964 the Prime Minister demanded that China demonstrate her worthiness for membership in the United Nations. After 1965, the government began cautiously to suggest that China's presence in the United Nations would be useful, and that she had a right to participate in discussions where her legitimate interests were concerned. However, this still did not override the factor of her unacceptable international behaviour. New Zealand demonstrated her interest in China's entry into the United Nations with her support for a study committee on the issue.

Whereas China could not be admitted to the United Nations because its policies violated the moral strictures of the Charter, it could not be diplomatically recognised by New Zealand because its policies threatened New Zealand's interests. China, in New Zealand's eyes, wanted to undermine the independence of South-east Asian countries, which New Zealand believed was vital to its security. China was, in

particular, seen as the motive force behind the war in Vietnam in which New Zealand was involved. Even if the Taiwan obstacle could be overcome, the government believed that China could not be recognised while New Zealand and South-east Asia were trying to resist her subversion. Recognition in these circumstances could only be appeasement.

As the decade wore on - and the Vietnam War continued - official rhetoric changed from stressing resistance to Chinese policies and non-appeasement to the desirability of an accommodation with China. In January, 1967, Holyoake said that it was not an answer to isolate Peking, and contacts between China and the Western world were desirable. The government was careful to emphasise, however, that there could be no real relationship until China changed her policies.

CHAPTER 6

NEW ZEALAND AND CHINA 1969-72

Introduction

The year 1969 saw the beginnings of change in the policies of Western states towards China, and also signs of a more receptive attitude on the part of the Chinese towards Western overtures. Canada began to negotiate with China in February for diplomatic relations, and the new Nixon administration in the United States announced itself eager for a new relationship with China. China, after the belligerence and chaos of the Cultural Revolution, and in the face of a perceived threat from the Soviet Union, seemed to be assuming a more moderate outlook. New Zealand in this period declared positively that it wanted to recognise China and see it admitted to the United Nations, and, publicly at least, discarded China's international behaviour (which it did not see as fundamentally changed) as a constraint on recognition. The Taiwanese constraint, however was upheld. Moves towards an improved relationship with China did not get underway until 1971, after New Zealand's two closest allies, the United States and Australia, announced positive measures to increase contact, and after the Labour Opposition began pressing the issue. By the end of the government's term of office, however, little progress had been made.

In May, 1968, the new Canadian Prime Minister, Pierre Trudeau, announced in his first foreign policy statement that his government would proceed immediately to enter into negotiations with the government of Communist China.

> "Our aim will be to recognise the People's Republic of China government as soon as possible and to enable that government to occupy the seat of China in the United Nations, taking into account that there is a separate government in Taiwan".[1]

Canada's government was now prepared to seize the initiative in the matter of coming to terms with China, even though it, too, had a concern for the interests of the Taiwanese and had in the past been unwilling to cross the Americans on the issue.

Unlike New Zealand, Canada did not see China's attitude to the rest of the world as a reason for standing off from it diplomatically. Canadian negotiations opened with the Chinese in February, 1969.

Prime Minister Holyoake took the opportunity of discussing the question with Trudeau when the two met for the first time in January, 1969 at the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' conference in London. Holyoake told Trudeau that New Zealand, too, was prepared to extend full diplomatic recognition to Communist China, but not at the expense of New Zealand's diplomatic relations with Taiwan.[2] This was the most positive statement yet made by the government on relations with China, and there was apparently no reference to China's international behaviour. The New Zealand position differed from Canada's in its insistence that the world acknowledge two Chinas, and in its determination to stay with the Republic of China if there

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[1] Dobell, P.C. "*Canada's Search for New Roles - Foreign Policy in the Trudeau Era*" pp103-104

[2] *Otago Daily Times* January 29, 1969, p5

were no movement in that direction. The Canadians did not mind severing the diplomatic link with the Nationalist Chinese government as long as they did not thereby legally endorse the Communist claim to Taiwan. In May, 1969, Canadian Minister of External Affairs Mitchell Sharp said:

> "Canada has a One-China policy, and since the Nationalist government purports also to be the government of China we cannot recognise both Peking and Taiwan at the same time".[3]

New Zealand believed that a continuing commitment to the government of Taiwan was necessary to preserve the rights of the people of the island. Canada did not.

Holyoake discussed the recognition of Peking with two other governments while he was in Europe: those of France and Italy. The latter was, like Canada, seeking to develop a relationship with China.

Again, Holyoake emphasised that Taiwan was the only constraint on New Zealand's supporting a positive policy towards Communist China.

> "I told them I was as aware as they of the anomalous features of China's international position, and I acknowledged the absurdity of having the most populous nation on earth outside the United Nations organisation. But, I emphasised, New Zealand was not prepared to see Communist China's entry achieved at the expense of the right of the people of Taiwan to their own representation".[4]

The Prime Minister told the Italians that the Taiwanese government was as much a reality as that of Communist China, and it was one with which New Zealand had friendly and fruitful relations. New Zealand valued the contributions made by Taiwan to forms of regional co-operation in which New Zealand was engaged, he said.

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[3] *External Affairs* (Canada) vol. 22, No.12, p415

[4] *Annual Report of the Department of External Affairs* 1969, p7, AJHR A-1

[This was a reference to the Asian and Pacific Council]. In addition, New Zealand, as a small nation near Asia, could not lightly regard the wishes of the people of Taiwan themselves.

Back in New Zealand, the Prime Minister repeated these sentiments publicly. At the annual conference of the United Nations Association in March, Holyoake said that he wanted to make it quite clear that New Zealand's policy was not directed towards excluding Communist China from the United Nations. The Prime Minister reiterated that it was now "patently absurd" that the most populous country in the world did not take part in the United Nations Organisation, but for New Zealand it was objectionable that Taiwan had to be ejected to make room for it.[5]

The Prime Minister explained New Zealand's obsession with Taiwan by saying: "We have a special sympathy for the position of other small states and we value our association with Nationalist China, particularly in regional activities which we share with them". Holyoake noted that some faint indications of a possible change in Communist China's attitudes had appeared. "Perhaps the Canadians will find more when they discuss the question of recognition with the Chinese Communists. We'll be following these talks with great interest".

In his introduction to the Annual Report of the Department of External Affairs, tabled in Parliament in June, Holyoake said that he thought that the Canadian and Italian negotiations offered " a most useful opportunity for testing Communist China's disposition to seek

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[5] *External Affairs Review* March 1969, p27

wider and better relations in the international community at large".[6] Evidence of such a disposition, it seemed, would be a willingness to compromise on the Taiwan issue.

When a member of the Opposition, J.L. Hunt, asked Holyoake in Parliament whether members could assume that if Canada and Italy recognised Communist China, New Zealand would shortly afterwards do so, the Prime Minister replied that this would depend entirely on the terms and conditions under which these governments granted recognition. Holyoake said that he had already made some reservations, one of which was in respect to the position of the Nationalist Chinese, and there were "some other considerations too lengthy to go into now".[7]

Another Opposition member, J. Mathison, suggested that one of these other considerations was the views of New Zealand's allies.

> "Would it be a fair interpretation of the Prime Minister's answer to say that we will have to wait until America and Australia follow the lead of Canada and Italy before New Zealand reconsiders her attitude on this question?"[8]

The Prime Minister denied that interpretation of his answer, saying that New Zealand would make up its own mind on the matter. He went on to emphasise that the "basic problem" for New Zealand was Communist China's refusal to accept the existence of two Chinas. Whatever the other considerations were, they were not publicly as important as New Zealand's commitment to Taiwan.

One of the other considerations seems to have been a reluctance to encourage the South-east Asian states to enter into too close a relationship with China. The effect of a New Zealand recognition of

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[6] *A.R.D.E.A.* 1969, p7 AJHR A-1

[7] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 360, p446, 3 June, 1969

[8] Ibid.

China on the governments of South-east Asia had always been a factor in recognition policy. The New Zealand government still feared the security implications of an extension of Chinese influence over South-east Asia, and recognition by New Zealand, a close associate of South-east Asian nations, could serve as a bad example to them. In May, the Assistant Secretary of External Affairs, O.P. Gabites, had posited this problem.

Gabites told the Institute of Public Administration in May that New Zealand shared a concern with the Soviet Union "to see limits imposed on the extension of Chinese influence". [Holyoake had reiterated in March that the extension of Chinese influence in South-east Asia would pose a long-term threat to Australia and New Zealand]. Gabites said that although China's attitudes would seem to modify after the Cultural Revolution, probably in the form of a return to the policies of the Bandung era, this would only be another tactic to expand Chinese influence. Any reaching-out policy on China's part he said would tax New Zealand's political skill to the utmost.

> "We will need to strike a sensible balance between encouraging moves which will enable the rest of Asia to live at peace with China, and urging a degree of caution in the face of what we know of Chinese determination to shape the destiny of Asia in accordance with Chinese interests".[9]

The government was worried that if it encouraged moves by South-east Asian states to develop relations with China, those nations would find themselves more open to subversion. A move by New Zealand

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[9] 'Political Developments Affecting New Zealand in the Pacific' *E.A.R.* May, 1969, p13

to grant diplomatic recognition to China would hardly be "striking a sensible balance": it would be a spur when caution was necessary.

The Minister of Industries and Commerce reflected this ambivalence in a speech made in Tokyo a month later at the fourth meeting of the Asian and Pacific Council. N.H. Shelton said that his government agreed that the time had come for Asian leaders to try to have talks with the leaders of Communist China.

> "Because of its size, its vast population, and its growing military strength, Communist China will have a major impact on the future of our area. Our task is to see if we can persuade the Communist Chinese to act in ways which will not threaten the independence of other states".

Shelton went on to warn:

> "We do not believe for a moment that Communist China will abandon its objective of establishing itself as the dominant influence throughout Asia. It may, however, modify its methods".[10]

The dilemma was that while the objective of persuasion seemed to point towards a policy of establishing diplomatic relations, an unpersuaded China could use this policy for its own nefarious ends.

Despite Holyoake's saying that New Zealand would make up its own mind on the China issue, the government had always regarded the American attitude as the major factor in any decision on China. A new, Republican, administration under Nixon had taken over the United States in January. Initially, it appeared there would be no change in China policy. Asked at his first Presidential press conference about plans for improving relations with China, Nixon had said:

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[10] *O.D.T.* June 11, 1969, p1

> "The policy of this country and this administration at this time will be to continue to oppose Communist China's admission to the United Nations".

The President saw "no immediate prospect" of any change in United States policy until some changes occurred on the Chinese side.[11] It was soon evident, however, that new policies towards Asia were in train. In June, Nixon announced the first withdrawals of American troops from Vietnam, and the next month, in a speech at Guam, said that in the future the United States would avoid sending its own combat troops to threatened Asian countries. The United States would expect those countries to bear the main burden of their own defence. This was labelled the "Nixon doctrine". It was evident that the Americans were disillusioned with the policy of military containment of China. Accompanying the beginnings of disengagement were new gestures towards China.

On July 21, 1969, the State Department announced a slight easing of the travel and trade restrictions applying to China. Certain categories of people would henceforth have their passports automatically validated for China, and American tourists could bring up to $100 worth of Chinese goods into the country. Previously there had been a total embargo on trade.[12] The steps were in themselves minor, but a break with the pattern of the past, and symbolic of American preparedness to take the initiative to establish more normal relations with China.

At the ANZUS Council in August, 1969, New Zealand representatives heard the new attitude expounded by Secretary of State

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[11] MacFarquhar, R. *Sino-American Relations* 1949-1971, p247 quoting *Department of State Bulletin*, February 17, 1969, p141

[12] Congressional Quarterly Inc. *China and U.S. Foreign Policy* p19

William Rogers. Communist China, he said, had

> "obviously long been too isolated from world affairs. This is one reason why we have been seeking to open up channels of communication ... our purpose (is) to remove irritants in our relations and to help remind people on mainland China of our historic friendship for them .. we were prepared to offer specific suggestions on an agreement for more normal relations when the Chinese cancelled the scheduled resumption of the Ambassadorial talks in Warsaw last February .. We would like to resume the dialogue, and we would hope that they do, too".[13]

The view of the new Australian Minister of External Affairs, Freeth,[14] was a definite contrast. The Australian government had no interest in contact with Peking.

> "We have ourselves no proposals at the moment for specific attempts to get into contact with Peking ... We do not believe that we would have success where others don't".[15]

The New Zealand representative's view was not made publicly available.

When Prime Minister Holyoake visited Canada the next month, he publicly approved the Canadian moves towards relations with China. Answering a question at a press conference in Ottawa, he said:

> "I'm encouraged that your government should be carrying out this initiative. Probing, seeing if they can find some way of persuading this very populous country ... to come into the community of nations and to play its part. I think its very important. The conditions on which it comes ... is another thing ... But any nation ... that is prepared to carry out a dialogue ... is, to my mind, good".[16]

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[13] Greenwood, G. "The Political Debate in Australia" in Greenwood and Harper, (eds.) *Australia in World Affairs 1966-70* p82

[14] Freeth replaced the long-serving Paul Hasluck in April, 1969. Freeth was himself replaced as Minister of External Affairs by McMahon in October, 1969.

[15] Greenwood, op cit., p82

[16] *E.A.R.* September, 1969, p29.

Holyoake said that if Canada could find a way around having to withdraw recognition from Taiwan, New Zealand would be very interested.

Although there were no announcements of a New Zealand move to contact Peking for bi-lateral discussions, the government did raise the issue of Chinese representation again at the United Nations. New Zealand Ambassador to the United Nations J.V. Scott asked the General Assembly in November whether the time had not come to consider whether there was some fresh approach which could be made which might bring a more constructive response from the Chinese Communist government. The Ambassador reiterated that New Zealand believed that the presence of Communist China in the United Nations could make a significant contribution to many of the fundamental problems affecting world peace and security. New Zealand's representative went on to suggest, for the first time, that China's presence in the United Nations could lead to a modification of that country's policies. This suggestion was something of a *volte-face* from the position of previous years that China should not be admitted to the United Nations *until* it had modified its policies.

> "The effects of isolation on Peking are severe. Its visions of the world outside are restricted, doctrinaire and hostile. We should like to believe, therefore, that the presence of Communist China in the United Nations might serve to draw it towards a less militant and more reasonable and outward-looking approach to the pressing problems of its own region and the world. It is true that in the past Communist China has shown little respect for either the principles of the United Nations Charter or this Organisation. But that does not mean that we, ourselves, should not try to bring about some movement".[17]

Scott, however, did not present the Assembly with any resolution to act upon.

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[17] *E.A.R.* November, 1969, p53

When Parliament opened in 1970, foreign affairs - and China among them - were early topics of debate. The Prime Minister said that he was happy to note that Communist China appeared ready to move away from its self-imposed isolation, but he noted also that China continued to follow its publicly proclaimed policy of supporting insurgent movements in the surrounding countries.

> "Nobody knows whether the situation there will develop in such a way that China will be willing to live and let live in the international community",

Holyoake said.[18] He went on to declare that he thought New Zealand had to do all it could to pave the way and make it possible for change in Communist China, but offered no clues as to how New Zealand would do this. The government did not seem prepared to advance beyond the stage of platitudes of good intentions. The obvious method of an increase in cultural contacts was not mentioned.

When a Labour spokesman, A.J. Faulkner, called explicitly for the recognition of Communist China, the government continued to insist that it wanted to recognise, but could not get around the insuperable obstacle of Taiwan. Government Whip J.R. Harrison said that the Opposition knew that the government would "very much like" to recognise China and support its admission to the United Nations, but that China imposed the condition that only one China should be recognised, and that New Zealand could not accept that condition because it would mean throwing over one of the country's "trusted friends", the government of Nationalist China.[19] The Minister of Customs, L.R. Adams-Schneider said: "We are concerned, if we take this step, to ensure that Communist China recognises the independence and integrity of

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18 *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 365, p499 & p501, 16 April, 1970

19 *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 365, p513, 16 April, 1970

Taiwan. This is fundamental to the position we take up".[20]

Later in the month, Holyoake admitted that it was not only Communist China's attitude to a continuing recognition of Taiwan that was a problem, but also Nationalist China's attitude to a recognition of Peking. The Nationalists were likely to break diplomatic relations even if Communist China were to agree to a two-China proposition. Until both parties were prepared to accept a two-China situation there could be no real progress.[21]

Even as the government admitted that the situation was dead - locked, it was acknowledging ever more readily a necessity to normalise relations with the People's Republic of China. Answering a parliamentary question in June, 1970, the Prime Minister said it was "becoming a matter of increasing urgency" that Communist China should be enabled to take part in United Nations discussions on disarmament and other questions of international importance. Some solution, he said, ought to be found soon to the question of Chinese representation. Holyoake said that he had pointed out to the General Assembly two years previously that the effectiveness of the organisation was impaired when a quarter of the world's population was not represented. The problem, however, was one of overcoming the tendency in the Assembly to approach the question from mutally exclusive viewpoints instead of seeking the middle ground where a just solution might be found.[22] The Prime Minister's questioner, Dr A.M. Finlay, had asked him to indicate what proposals the government had in mind in view of

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[20] Ibid., p547

[21] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 365, p751, 24 April, 1970

[22] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 366, p1203, 24 June, 1970

Scott's United Nations statement the previous year that the time had come for a new attempt to find a solution to the Chinese representation problem. Holyoake told him that the government did not have any concrete proposals in mind: the views of the United Nations representative were to be seen only as "a move to create the right climate of opinion" for a solution. Before a proposal could be advanced, there would need to be some indication that the two Chinese governments would be disposed to consider it. In the light of this explanation, the New Zealand representative's speech appears to have been both an appeal to the backers of the Albanian resolution to desist, and to the Chinese governments to think again about accepting a two-China solution.

In October, 1970, after almost two years of negotiations, Canada and China finally established diplomatic relations. It was the first such agreement between China and a Western nation since 1964. In their announcement of the establishment of relations, the Canadians declared that they recognised the Government of the People's Republic as the sole legal government of China. As for Taiwan, the Canadian government merely "took note" of the reaffirmed position of the Chinese government that Taiwan was an inalienable part of the People's Republic of China, without agreeing with it. This non-committal attitude was in line with a declaration by Foreign Minister Sharp in February, 1969, that the Canadian government was unlikely to "recognise or challenge the sovereignty of Peking over Formosa".[23]

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[23] *External Affairs* (Canada) vol. 22, No.12, December, 1970, p415

For several months the Chinese had demanded that the Canadians declare their acceptance of Peking's rights of sovereignty over Taiwan, but Canada had held out. The Chinese had demanded, and received, an assurance that Canada's attitude in the United Nations would be consistent with its declaration of recognising only one Chinese government: that is, they would support the seating of Peking at the expense of Taipei. The Chinese also wanted an assurance that official relations with Taiwan would be severed when relations with Peking were established.[24]

The New Zealand Prime Minister called the announcement "an interesting development", but was quick to throw cold water on any idea that Canada's recognition presaged movement in the same direction on New Zealand's part.

> "I should again stress, that New Zealand's policy will be decided on the basis of our own interests and our own assessment of the situation, which are not necessarily the same as Canada's".[25]

The Prime Minister said that the New Zealand government had acknowledged that it would "in due course" be necessary for Asian and Pacific countries to come to terms with Peking, and that New Zealand itself was "prepared to seek direct ties with Communist China". He went on to reiterate the usual constraints.

> "On the other hand, I have stressed many times the values we place upon our links with the Government of the Republic of China on Taiwan. We intend to retain them. We do not acknowledge Peking's claim to Taiwan, nor its right to assert that claim with force".

Canada's recognition had moved contrary to New Zealand policy in three respects. First, it had involved the derecognition

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[24] Ibid., p416

[25] Statements by Ministers of the Crown 1970, p371

of the Nationalist Government on Taiwan, since the People's Republic had been conceded to be the sole legal government of China: New Zealand would not countenance that. Secondly, the Canadians had agreed to vote for the Albanian resolution to replace Taipei with Peking in the United Nations, a vote New Zealand was not prepared to make. Thirdly, the Canadians had taken no stand on Peking's claim to Taiwan. While they had not endorsed it, neither had they opposed it.

New Zealand, in line with its two-China policy, firmly opposed the claim, and declared itself unable to recognise the People's Republic while Peking itself still held that position. The Sino-Canadian communique had blatantly restated the objectionable Chinese claim. Accordingly, Holyoake ended his statement with the observation that he had doubts about whether the Sino-Canadian agreement provided a basis on which New Zealand could appropriately proceed towards the establishment of relations with Communist China.[26]

The editor of the New Zealand Broadcasting Corporation publication, the '*Listener*', Alexander Macleod, commented in early November:

> "If, as seems probable, we choose not to follow Canada, the reason will not be that Peking lacks claims to recognition. It will be that the regime in Taiwan is considered to have prior claims. How is it that a government controlling a bare thirteen million people can grip our attention when one with nearly 60 times that number cannot? The answer is that ... our policies are closely geared to the exigencies of alliance diplomacy ..".[27]

Macleod was convinced that New Zealand's solicitousness for Taiwan was mainly a function of American commitment to that government.

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[26] Statements by Ministers of the Crown 1970, p371

[27] *New Zealand Listener*, vol. 65, No.1619, November 2, 1970, p5

It does seem likely that the American attitude was a continuing factor in New Zealand's fidelity to Taiwan. Despite the Nixon administration's avowed interest in a better relationship with China, it was not prepared to grant the People's Republic diplomatic recognition, and it did not want its allies to move ahead of it in that respect. When the Canadians had announced moves to negotiate with Peking in February, 1969, Secretary of State Rogers had expressed American objections to the Canadian Ambassador in Washington, and the State Department had publicly expressed its grave concern over the implications of such moves for the position of the Government of the Republic of China.[28] The American government was still concerned, too, that recognition by individual countries would make the eventual negotiation of a general *modus vivendi* in the Far East more difficult. However, it brought no pressure to bear to halt the Sino-Canadian negotiations.[29] The State Department's Report to Congress for 1969-70 noted that four governments had recognised Communist China in 1970 (Canada, Italy, Ethiopia and Equatorial Guinea) and claimed that

> "When consulted during these developments we have taken the view that the establishment of diplomatic relations with Peking is essentially a matter for each country to decide in the light of its own interests".[30]

The Report had gone on to say:

> "But we have also expressed the view that the interests of the Republic of China ... should not be sacrificed".

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[28] Quo, F.Q. and Ichikawa, A. "Sino-Canadian Relations: A New Chapter", in *Asian Survey*, May, 1972, pp391-92

[29] Thomson, D.C. and Swanson, R.F. *Canadian Foreign Policy, Options and Perspectives*, p115 and p132

[30] Department of State *United States Foreign Policy 1969-70 - A Report of the Secretary of State* p44

If the American reaction to its allies' recognition of China had mellowed considerably since 1964, it was still opposed to that recognition. New Zealand's other major ally, Australia, too, was showing no inclination to change its mind on the matter. The Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1970, McMahon,[31] told the Australian Parliament in October that China would have to renounce the use of violence and force as a means of attaining its political objectives before Australia would reconsider its position on admission to the United Nations.[32]

The New Zealand Prime Minister had his own explanation for Taiwan's grip on the government's attention. In November, he issued a statement explaining New Zealand's unchanging vote at the United Nations on the China representation issue. Holyoake (recently knighted to become Sir Keith Holyoake) stressed that New Zealand attached great importance to the rights of small nations, and believed that the United Nations existed for the benefit of the weak rather than the strong.[33] Taiwan's claim, as a small nation, to recognition thus weighed more heavily with New Zealand than China's claim as a great power. Taiwan, it was believed, needed the United Nations more than did the People's Republic, although the United Nations as a peace-keeping body needed the People's Republic more than Taiwan.

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[31] The Australian Department of External Affairs became the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in late 1969. McMahon became its Minister after the October, 1969 general elections in which Freeth was defeated. McMahon went on to become Prime Minister in March, 1971.

[32] *Current Notes on International Affairs* (Australia) October, 1970, p539.

[33] *O.D.T.* November 27, 1970, p5

By the nineteen-seventies, too, New Zealand had more than just a political affection for Taiwan. The relationship had a growing economic aspect. Before 1967, there was virtually no trade between the two countries. In that year, however, Taiwan suddenly bought $655,000 worth of New Zealand goods. The next year the purchase more than doubled in value to $1,516,000, and in 1969, it doubled again to $3,702,000.[34] Although this figure represented only 0.35 percent of the value of New Zealand's total export earnings, the trade with Taiwan became a publicly mentioned factor in preserving the diplomatic link. In September, 1969, the Minister of Housing, Mr Rae, predicted that Taiwan and New Zealand would move into a much closer relationship. Enlivened trade could cement the already good relationship between the two countries.[35] Early in 1970, after visiting Taiwan, the Deputy Prime Minister, Marshall, claimed that Taiwan was "one of the future growth markets of New Zealand. It will take an increasing amount of meat, wool, dairy products and timber".[36] It is interesting to note, however, that the next New Zealand diplomatic post established in Asia was in South Korea, whose 1969 purchase of New Zealand goods was half the value of Taiwan's.[37] The government was being cautious about too firm a commitment to Taiwan.

At the beginning of 1971, President Nixon, in a foreign policy message to Congress, made an important statement of his administration's attitude to China. He said that it was prepared to establish a dialogue with Peking, provided that the evolution of the dialogue

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[34] "Direction of New Zealand Exports", Appendix I, *Annual Report of the Department of Industries and Commerce 1970* p72 AJHR H-44

[35] *O.D.T.* September 1, 1969, p3

[36] *O.D.T.* April 28, 1970, p8

[37] *A.R.D.I.C.* 1970, p72

was not at the expense of American commitments. The United States was prepared to see the People's Republic of China play a constructive role in the family of nations, but the question of its place in the United Nations was not merely a question of whether it should participate. The United States would continue to oppose attempts to deprive the Republic of China of its place in the United Nations. In the coming year, Nixon said, he would carefully examine what further steps might be taken to create broader opportunities for contacts between the Chinese and American peoples. "We hope for, but will not be deterred by a lack of reciprocity".[38] On April 14, the President announced an end to visa restrictions on Americans going to China; a review of the restricted exports list to China; permission for American ships to carry Chinese cargoes, and a relaxation of currency controls so that the Chinese could use American dollars.[39]

The People's Republic suddenly clearly signalled the United States that it was interested in an accommodation, in April, 1971, by inviting the American table tennis team, playing in the world championships in Japan, to visit China. The American government was only too eager to respond.

In mid-April the Australian government suddenly began to issue some policy statements on China. The first came on April 15 from the new Prime Minister, McMahon, and this was followed by a lengthy statement by the Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs, R.W.C. Swartz, on April 22. These statements seem to have been primarily reactions

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[38] MacFarquhar, R. *Sino-American Relations* 1949-1971, p252

[39] Ibid. p254

to the April 14 announcement by the Australian Labor Party that it would seek to send a delegation to China.

McMahon's speech was a defence of existing China policy. The Prime Minister said that while an accommodation with mainland China was a necessity, the first priority for the Australian government was the preservation of the security of the Taiwanese government.[40] The Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs noted first that President Nixon had said that it would be premature to talk of diplomatic recognition of China by the United States. Then he said that while it was true that the Chinese were now showing an interest in regularising their relations with certain Western states, they were continuing their support for armed revolution and insurgency in other areas. The Minister implied that recognition could not be granted while the Chinese continued that support. Finally Swartz reiterated McMahon's point that Australia could not leave Taiwan to face China alone. The Acting Minister said that, in sum, conditions for diplomatic recognition had not been realised.[41]

In Australian eyes, then, there were three factors inhibiting recognition - the fact that the Americans were not ready to grant it (and Australia would not move ahead of the Americans); China's continuing support for South-east Asia revolutionary movements and concern for the effect on the Taiwan government.

Only two days after Schwartz's statement, a spokesman for the National goverment in New Zealand said that the New Zealand government

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[40] Fitzgerald, S. *Talking with China: The Australian Labor Party Visit and Peking's Foreign Policy* p14

[41] *Current Notes on International Affairs* April 1971, p210

would not be making any moves to discuss recognition with Communist China. However, it was clear that this was not because such a move was undesirable, but because it would be unproductive.

Addressing the annual conference of the New Zealand United Nations Association on April 24 in the Prime Minister's stead, backbencher W.L. Young justified the government's unwillingness to initiate negotiations with Peking for recognition on the grounds that New Zealand's attachment to the relationship with Taiwan made the exercise futile.

> "The experience of Canada, Italy and other countries has made it clear that Peking is not prepared to enter into diplomatic relations with any government that maintains such relations with Taiwan. We have reluctantly concluded that there is at present no basis for the establishment of relations between New Zealand and Communist China, and that there would be little point in entering into negotiations with Peking on the question while this situation prevails".[42]

Young's statement, however, did seem to show that the New Zealand government's attitude was in advance of Australia's. New Zealand had no doubts that recognition of China was a desirable policy move, unlike the Australian government, which still seemed to see non-recognition as a weapon to combat Chinese subversion. The New Zealand government had "reluctantly" concluded that relations could not be established because of one practical obstacle: the Chinese government's demands for a break with Taiwan. If formal relations could not be established, there were, apparently, no other reasons for contact.

The international scene with regard to China was still fluid, and on April 29, President Nixon, at a press conference, hinted at further American moves towards a relationship with China. Concessions

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[42] *New Zealand Foreign Affairs Review* (N.Z.F.A.R) April, 1971, p38

to that date had "broken the ice" between China and the United States, he said, and the administration now had to test the water to see how deep it was. Nixon said that he expected to visit mainland China at some time, and that he hoped to contribute to a policy which would mean a new relationship with China.[43]

The next significant development from New Zealand's point of view was the Australian Prime Minister's sudden announcement on May 11 that his government now intended to "explore the possibilities of a dialogue with the People's Republic of China".[44]

The Australian government's aim was simply to increase the amount of trading and cultural contacts between the two countries and not to try and negotiate recognition. McMahon made explicit Swartz's April implication that the Australian government still saw China's international behaviour as a barrier to formal recognition.

> "We must bear in mind that a major obstacle to the development of formal relations with the People's Republic of China has been the government's support for insurgency and subversion in countries of the region with which we as an Australian govern- have close relations and mutual strategic interests".[45]

When asked to comment on the Australian announcement of a try for a dialogue, the New Zealand Prime Minister now admitted that his government was also interested in talking with China about improved relations.

> "We would be glad to have talks with a view to establishing a basis for the improvement of our relations with China".[46]

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[43] Ibid., p40

[44] *Current Notes on International Affairs* May, 1971, p269

[45] *Current Notes on International Affairs* May, 1971, p269

[46] Statements by Ministers of the Crown 1971, p157

Two weeks earlier Young had said that the government could see no point in talks about recognition; Holyoake now thought that talks about other matters could be valuable. The fact that recognition was still out was emphasised by the Prime Minister's reiteration that the government had no intention of severing ties with Taiwan. Holyoake went on to say that he still believed that both Peking and Taipei would "sooner or later have to accept each other's existence". If it had to be later, it seemed, New Zealand would wait. The Prime Minister's comment stopped short of saying that New Zealand would join the Australians in exploring the possibilities of a dialogue.

A fortnight later, the Prime Minister made a lengthy statement on China policy. Holyoake explained that the statement was being made because Peking seemed to have "turned a new leaf and to be taking a more friendly attitude towards the outside world", which in turn had led to questions being asked about New Zealand's policy towards China. The Prime Minister went on immediately to warn against the new leaf belief.

"No useful purpose will be served by forgetting all that we have learned about China and imagining that everything is now different", he said. "It never is".[47] Holyoake went on to assert that the Communists had set out to make China, in reality as well as name, the dominant power in Asia. This claim to hegemony was unacceptable "to those who believe that even small countries have a right to choose for themselves". Recent events in Cambodia had made it clear that Peking had not given up its goal of eliminating foreign influence in Asia and establishing its own in their place.

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[47] Statements by Ministers of the Crown 1971, p181

[In March, the neutralist government of Prince Sihanouk had been overthrown in Cambodia and replaced by a pro-Western government. China and North Vietnam had pledged support for an effort to put Sihanouk back into power militarily].

Despite China's behaviour, Holyoake said that the government wanted better relations between China and New Zealand. In saying this, Holyoake rejected the old 'behaviour' criterion as a determinant of policy towards China. China's moves might still be directed against New Zealand's interests, but this was no longer sufficient to justify a negative attitude towards her.

> "We believe that if opportunities for movement in this direction [better relations] are opening up, they should not be missed".[48]

The Prime Minister pointed out that China had special significance for countries like New Zealand that were located in the Pacific area and that were actually or potentially within reach of China's power.

> "We believe that it is important for the peace and security of the Pacific that the countries of this area come to terms with Peking and work out a way of living with it. We should like to have diplomatic relations and we should welcome talks aimed at establishing a basis for those relations".[49]

In the space of a month, the government had changed its mind on the utility of holding talks on the subject of recognition. In April, there had been no point to them. Now they were welcomed. The only apparent stimuli to this had been the Australian and American moves towards a dialogue with China.

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[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid., p186

The Prime Minister reiterated that New Zealand intended to maintain its relations with the Government of the Republic of China, mentioning yet again the long and friendly association between the two countries, and, this time, the economic factor.

> "... for the present and for some time to come, our trade prospects with Taiwan seem at least as good as those with mainland China, and this strengthens our interest in maintaining our relations with the Nationalist government".[50]

Trade prospects with either China were, however, a secondary consideration. The Prime Minister said that although it was important that the Pacific countries - for the sake of peace - came to terms with Peking, it was more important for New Zealand that a small country should not be abandoned in the face of the demands of a great power. "That is why the government is resolved to maintain our existing ties with Taiwan and to uphold its right to its accepted place in the international community".

Although it was seen as more important to try for a relationship with China than to express disapproval of its policies by withholding recognition, this relationship could not be at the expense of the interests of New Zealand's friends.

The government saw no urgency in the need to establish links with China, and was quite prepared to wait until Peking saw fit to change its position on Taiwan.

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[50] Ibid. p188. In 1970, the value of N.Z. exports to Taiwan dropped to $2,276,000, compared with $3,702,000 in 1969. The value of exports going to the P.R.C. was $3,909,000 in 1970, compared with $4,092,000 in 1969. Appendix I, *Annual Report of the Department of Trade and Industry*, 1973, p74. (AJHR G-14)

> "We do not believe that Peking need remain locked in its present position ... If it is willing to reduce its demands or to place the issue of Taiwan on one side, the prospect of a variety of fruitful relationships would open up .. so it is up to China".[51]

In mid-June, in a speech to the Dunedin branch of the Royal Overseas League, the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, G.R. Laking,[52] said that no-one should be surprised at the New Zealand attitude. Laking said that there were some who were inclined to urge that New Zealand forsake her ties with Taiwan and deal with the reality of China, but these people overlooked the fact that Taiwan was a reality, too. Laking claimed:

> "It has been a consistent theme of our foreign policy that the interests of small entities should not be sacrificed merely because it becomes inconvenient to recognise or accommodate them".[53]

Taiwan's interests were seen as of concern to New Zealand. It would be a blow for those interests if Taiwan were to be excluded from the United Nations, therefore New Zealand must oppose that exclusion. The Secretary had virtually said that Taiwan's interests should take precedence over New Zealand's other interests in the matter.

The Prime Minister in his May statement had placed the onus of improving the political relationship between China and New Zealand on China. No fundamental change could come about without a change in Chinese attitudes. Nevertheless, the government seemingly did feel threatened by a Labour Party call on May 27 to take some initiative to increase trade with China.

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51 Statements by Ministers of the Crown 1971,p188

52 Laking replaced A.D. McIntosh in early 1966

53 *New Zealand Herald* June 9, 1971, p14

On June 8, 1971, Holyoake announced that the government would be willing to send a trade mission to China if the Chinese authorities would be willing to receive it. In explanation of the initiative, Holyoake said:

> "The political atmosphere has not hitherto been such as to make it seem worthwhile for us to approach the Chinese directly ... Recent developments suggest that the situation may now be different. Peking has still not responded to attempts made by Japan and a number of South-east Asian countries to establish contact at governmental level, but it has received trade missions from Malaysia and the Philippines. It seems worthwhile exploring the possibility that the Chinese might be prepared to go this far with New Zealand as well".[54]

At the end of 1972, Holyoake was to tell the Press that he had been approached after the June 8 statement by a Mr La Varis with the suggestion that La Varis's good offices might be used in making the initial contact with the Chinese authorities. "I welcomed the offer.."[55] La Varis, who did substantial business with the Chinese, had some exchanges with them and found out that a trade mission would not be acceptable at that time.

> "It was therefore decided to investigate the prospects for sending a representative group of New Zealanders drawn from significant sectors of the community who could serve as a goodwill mission. I accordingly authorised Mr La Varis to make an approach to his Chinese contacts".

Frustrated in its efforts to send a non-political trade mission, the government took the decision to persist in trying to get some sort of mission into China. This decision was made in mid-July, during the same week that President Nixon made his bombshell announcement that he would be journeying to Peking in the near future.

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[54] Statements by Ministers of the Crown 1971, p208

[55] Press Statements by Ministers of the Crown 1972, p352 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 21 November, 1972).

After the Cabinet meeting of Monday, July 19, Holyoake announced that an intermediary had been given his authorisation the previous week.[56] Nixon had made his announcement on Thursday, July 15. The Labour Party's spokesman on Trade and Industry, W.W. Freer, claimed that the authorisation was a direct result of the Nixon announcement. In Parliament on July 20, he said that the government's response to the Labour Party's May call to organise a mission to China had been tepid until the Nixon announcement, when the mission had become a matter of urgency.[57]

It is possible, however, that it was Labour Party pressure rather than Nixon that prompted a decision to persist with the Chinese. While the Australian Labor Party delegation was in Peking in early July, it had broken the news that Chinese officials were considering granting visas to a New Zealand Labour Party delegation.[58]

The Prime Minister would not have been eager to have the Labour Party upstage his government in the field of foreign policy, as the Australian Labor Party was successfully doing to its opponents. After the National Party caucus meeting on July 15, the Prime Minister told a news conference that the government was "working all the time" on the Labour Party's suggestion that a mission be sent to China. All kinds of possibilities were being considered, he said: a goodwill mission, a trade mission or a mixed delegation.[59]

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[56] *W.T.* July 19, 1971, p1

[57] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 373, p2003, 20 July, 1971

[58] *W.T.* July 19, 1971, p2

[59] *Waikato Times*, July 15, 1971, p1

La Varis's second approach produced an enquiry from the Chinese for further information as to the likely composition of the mission and the purpose it was intended to serve. The government's answer was conveyed to the Chinese in September,[60] but the Chinese evidently did not find it to their liking and the matter went no further until the next year.

The New Zealand government had not been informed of the American negotiations with China that led to the announcement on July 15 that President Nixon intended to visit China.[61] Nevertheless, the Prime Minister issued a press statement the next day welcoming the development.

> "It is heartening that after so many years of estrangement, contact between the leaders of China and the United States should be re-established. I naturally hope that this development will give new depth to recent tendencies on the part of China towards more relaxed relations with other countries. Vast possibilities for international peace and security would open up if the traditional friendship between the United States and China could be restored".[62]

Despite that recognition, the dramatic American move worried New Zealand. At the ANZUS Council meeting in October, both New Zealand and Australia pressed the Americans for an explanation of American intentions in seeking a *rapprôchement* with China. There

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[60] Press Statements by Ministers of the Crown 1972, p352. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs - "Goodwill Mission to China: N.Z. Intermediary", 21 November, 1972).

[61] United States Department of State, *United States Foreign Policy 1971 - A Report of the Secretary of State* p89: "U.S. initiatives to establish a dialogue with Peking caught both Australia and New Zealand by surprise... While there were good reasons for the United States to avoid premature disclosure of its plans, the problems this created for its allies again underlined the need for continuing close consultation".

[62] *New Zealand Foreign Affairs Review* July, 1971, p49

seemed to be concern on the part of the two ANZAC nations that the United States might be cultivating China at the expense of relations with Japan. New Zealand in particular, it was reported, laid stress on the importance of American-Japanese good relations to stability in Asia and the Pacific.[63]

Once again, New Zealand was more concerned with maintaining understanding between allies than about accommodations with the 'enemy'. It seems possible that the two Australasian countries were fearful that Japan might be encouraged to move closer to the Soviet Union or China as the result of the American initiative. The old nemesis of the 'fifties was still there. If the Americans - who could not be affected - moved towards detente with China, there was no cause for alarm: if, however, the West's Asian allies also moved towards detente with China they could be in danger of subversion.

The dramatic American announcement of July 15 was not followed by any New Zealand policy change on the recognition issue. Although New Zealand was not at all certain of the ultimate goal of the United States, the government indicated that it had no intention of budging from the certainties of its conservative position. A few days after the Nixon announcement, the Minister of Industries and Commerce, N.R. Shelton, said in Tokyo that he had assured the Taiwan government while he was on the island that New Zealand's policy towards it would not change in spite of American moves towards closer contacts with Peking. Shelton said that he had told Taiwan's Vice-President that New Zealand was one of Taiwan's friends, and reiterated the government's

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[63] *New Zealand Herald* October 4, 1971, p3

strong desire to see Taiwan remain in the United Nations.[64]

At the end of the month the National Party conference endorsed the attitude of the parliamentary party by refusing to pass a remit calling for the recognition of Communist China.[65]

In his introduction to the 1971 Annual Report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, tabled in Parliament in June, Holyoake had said that there was no scope for movement in the direction of diplomatic relations with China because Peking was still not prepared to enter into relations with any government that kept its relations with Taiwan. If any progress was to be made towards solving the problem, it was more likely to be made in the United Nations.

The Prime Minister went on to say that he believed that the time was ripe for a new approach in the United Nations based on the realities of the situation - the existence of two Chinese governments with effective control over their territories and their population. Such an approach could lead to a solution that was reasonable and fair to all concerned.[66]

Press reports in mid-July indicated that New Zealand was working with Australia and Japan on a two-Chinas resolution to be submitted to the next meeting of the United Nations General Assembly. Labour's W.W. Freer questioned the Prime Minister in Parliament on the matter and received indirect confirmation of it.[67]

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[64] *O.D.T.* July 22, 1971, p6

[65] *O.D.T.* July 31, 1971, p5

[66] *Annual Report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1971* p6

[67] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 373, p1987, 20 July, 1971

The initiative on the two-Chinas resolution, however, came from the United States, which had consulted Japan about a joint move.[68]

In early August it was announced that the United States was now prepared to support Communist China's entry into the United Nations, although not in the context of the Albanian resolution which denied Taiwan membership.[69] This policy change brought the American position into harmony with the theoretical position of New Zealand. The Americans were now prepared to activate a two-China policy, which New Zealand had been advocating (but not acting upon) for some time.

The Prime Minister described the American announcement as "a step in the right direction", and said that New Zealand would be glad to see Peking in the United Nations.

> "China's absence reduces the authority of the United Nations and its value as a forum for the discussion of political issues",

he said. Holyoake then put forward the suggestion that the United Nations should give Peking Taiwan's seat on the Security Council.

> "If the Security Council is to fulfil its functions in helping to maintain international peace and security, it must include those governments that exercise real power in the world. China is undoubtedly one of these. It is hard to see how the Council can play its part in dealing with problems like nuclear disarmament and the war in Indo-China unless Peking is represented on it".[70]

Logic suggested that the transfer of the Security Council seat would be an automatic consequence of Peking's admission, but this was not yet United States policy.

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[68] Halperin, M.H. "America and Asia: The Impact of Nixon's China Policy" p12 in MacFarquhar, R. *Sino-American Relations 1949-1971*

[69] Congressional Quarterly, Inc. *China and U.S. Foreign Policy* p8

[70] *O.D.T.* August 4, 1971, p1

The Security Council seat issue was probably New Zealand's first real initiative on the China question, and this suggestion was followed up diplomatically. The preliminary American draft resolution on the representation of two Chinas contained no provision for the transfer of the Security Council seat, and the New Zealand government made it plain to the Americans that it wanted this provision included before New Zealand would co-sponsor the American resolution. In its insistence, New Zealand was supported by Australia and the Philippines. In the middle of September, the Americans agreed to go along with the request.[71]

In carrying the People's Republic's banner for the Chinese seat on the Security Council, New Zealand was announcing that its first interest in the Chinese representation issue was the strengthening of the United Nations. In this instance, the wishes of Taiwan were over-ridden in the interests of improving the utility of the United Nations as a security-creating body. Minister of Industries and Commerce Shelton had told the press in July that the Taiwan government was very worried about the content of any resolution to admit Peking to the United Nations, and had said: "They seem more concerned with their seat in the Security Council than anything else".[72] The New Zealand government was prepared to stand by the principle of Taiwan's right to be represented in the United Nations, but not to support her claim to the China seat.

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[71] *O.D.T.* September 1, 1971, p6 (N.Z.P.A. Washington)

[72] *Waikato Times* July 21, 1971, p5

On September 21, the Prime Minister announced that New Zealand would co-sponsor two resolutions proposed by the United States on the question of Chinese representation. The first proposed that both the People's Republic and the Republic of China be seated and recommended that Peking be given the Chinese seat on the Security Council: the second was the familiar formula designed to quash the rival Albanian resolution: that any proposal that would result in depriving the Republic of China of representation was an important question requiring a two-thirds majority to pass.

Holyoake explained: "What the government has been looking for is a fair and reasonable solution which recognises the realities of the present situation ... The two draft resolutions proposed by the United States offer a realistic solution without prejudicing the eventual settlement of the claims involved".[73]

In October, however, the Albanian One-China resolution triumphed finally, and New Zealand's efforts to avoid the expulsion of Taiwan had failed. The Prime Ministerial statement on these events was accepting.

> "The decision in favour of the People's Republic of China [the first time Holyoake had used the term] makes the United Nations more directly reflect world realities and for that reason, I welcome it. Henceforth the United Nations will provide a setting within which the People's Republic will have ample freedom to explain its policies; at the same time it will be knit into the vast variety of United Nations activity and exposed in many ways to the opinions of other nations. China's isolation will be greatly reduced and I am hopeful that, as it assumes the opportunities and obligations of United Nations membership and enters the work of the Security Council, it will come to a new understanding of the world about it".[74]

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[73] Press Statements by Ministers of the Crown 1971, p342 (21 September, 1971)

[74] Press Statements by Ministers of the Crown 1971, p383 (26 October, 1971)

The Prime Minister believed that the United Nations would be a new containing device for China: the Chinese government would have to justify its policies before world opinion and perhaps be constrained in its actions in the future.

Holyoake said that he was deeply disappointed over the expulsion of Taiwan, and went on to make the point that the United Nations decision to recognise Peking did not mean that it accepted Peking's claim to Taiwan, or that it empowered the former to settle with the latter by force.[75] In the 'sixties the New Zealand government had consistently claimed that Peking's admission to the United Nations on its own terms *would* be tantamount to an endorsement of its claims to Taiwan, and New Zealand had used that as a reason for keeping Peking out. The Prime Minister was quick to make it clear that he did not consider that Peking's success in winning the China seat at the United Nations should precipitate a change in New Zealand's China policy. In Parliament in November, Holyoake gave a questioner an assurance that Taiwan's expulsion from the United Nations would not affect New Zealand's relations with that country.

Even the seal of official approval bestowed by the United Nations on Peking was not enough to make New Zealand transfer its allegiance. Despite the continued clinging to the relationship with Taiwan, the Prime Minister again expressed the government's interest in establishing formal links with Peking, and said that it was continuing to investigate the possibilities of this. The

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[75] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 376, p4288, 3 November, 1971

government must have known that the possibility was non-existent, yet persisted in giving the impression that something might be accomplished. Reality was deferred to in one instance: Holyoake told a Labour questioner that there were no efforts under way to have Taiwan readmitted to the United Nations.

In February, 1972, Sir Keith Holyoake stepped down as Prime Minister and was replaced by his deputy, J.R. Marshall. Holyoake, however, retained his Foreign Affairs portfolio in the new government, indicating that there would be no "new broom" foreign policies under the Marshall administration. That same month, President Nixon visited China. In the communique issued at the end of the visit, the American government declared that the United States acknowledged that all Chinese on either side of the Taiwan Strait maintained that there was but one China and that Taiwan was a part of China. The American government said that it did not challenge that position, and reaffirmed its interest in a peaceful settlement of the Taiwan question by the Chinese themselves. It said that it would progressively reduce its forces and military installations from Taiwan as tension in the area diminished.[76] When Prime Minister Marshall was asked whether New Zealand's attitude to Taiwan might change as a result of the communique said: "There has been no change in the New Zealand government's attitude and no consideration given to change". Then he added: "I want to hear the views of the representatives of the President who will be coming here before making any comment".[77] The implication was that some consideration to change might be given after hearing the details of the American outlook in the wake of the Nixon visit.

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[76] Congressional Quarterly, Inc. *China and U.S. Foreign Policy* p7

[77] *O.D.T.* February 29, 1972, p1

Commenting on the Nixon visit, the Minister of Foreign Affairs saw possibilities for New Zealand in its success.

> "President Richard Nixon's visit to China gives ground for hoping that in due course, New Zealand, too, will be able to establish a working relationship with Peking",

Sir Keith Holyoake said. The visit, he said, had confirmed that the Chinese wanted normal relations with countries whose social systems and approaches to Asian problems were different to their own. New Zealand would soon be given a first-hand account of the President's talks in Peking from two senior American officials.[78]

The State Department officials arrived in March. The senior was Marshall Green, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs. After meeting them, the Prime Minister stated that New Zealand had much to gain from a reduction in tension in Asia, and that a better understanding between the United States and China was a prospect all would welcome. As far as New Zealand was concerned, it still wished to maintain its ties with Taiwan, while seeking to improve relations with the People's Republic. Marshall said:

> "We have for some time been exploring the possibilities through informal channels but without positive results. In the light of what Mr Green has told us about the atmosphere President Nixon encountered in Peking, we will consider very carefully what approach we might now take to carry forward our interest in establishing a working relationship with China".[79]

Sir Keith Holyoake added that the ball was still in Peking's court over the question of a New Zealand goodwill mission to China. The government evidently felt that a further New Zealand initiative in

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[78] *O.D.T.* February 29, 1972, p1

[79] *O.D.T.* March 17, 1972, p1

that direction was now in order. The proposal had not seen any movement since September, 1971.

When Parliament reassembled in June, the National Party's opening speaker in the Address-in-Reply debate, H.C. Templeton, made a statement in favour of early normalisation of relations with China. Templeton had previously been an officer in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

> "We face a period of reassessment of our relations with China. We have none with the People's Republic of China, a great power containing a quarter of the world's population.. a country which is opening up its trade, a nuclear power with great military strength bordering on an area of the greatest strategic interest to New Zealand, South-east Asia. Many countries are moving to normalise relations with China. I believe we must do so, not merely to follow the fashion, but as a matter of hard common sense. As a minor power, we can only do this slowly. The People's Republic of China has not shown any real interest in establishing relations with us. Nevertheless, normalisation of relations with China is, I believe, an important foreign policy objective for the near future".[80]

In July, 1972, a Chinese table tennis team was invited to visit New Zealand by the New Zealand Table Tennis Association, and when it arrived it was met by several high-ranking government Ministers - including the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Internal Affairs. This, Holyoake told Parliament, was meant to demonstrate to the Chinese that the government wished to see further exchanges taking place.[81] There were two officials from the Chinese Foreign Ministry in the party, and as Holyoake later revealed, he "took the opportunity to explain once again what the government had in mind [regarding a New Zealand goodwill mission

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[80] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 378, p69, 13 June, 1972

[81] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 379, p1259, 27 July, 1972

to China]".[82] The Minister also suggested that the matter be taken up between the two countries' respective delegations to the United Nations. This was subsequently done, and there were several exchanges in New York before the change of government. In November, Holyoake was to say that the proposal put forward by the New Zealand government was for a mission to visit in 1973, and that he expected that a satisfactory arrangement would be made within the near future.[83]

In September, P.I. Wilkinson, National's member for Rodney, enquired about the progress of the dialogue between New Zealand and China. Holyoake outlined the government's hopes, but it was clear that there had been no progress at that stage. China, it seemed, was still not interested in New Zealand's approaches; despite the welcome to the table tennis team. The Minister said that New Zealand had made known to the Government of the People's Republic of China its interest in establishing a better working relationship between the two, and had the goodwill mission in mind as the first step.

Holyoake said that the purpose of any goodwill mission would be to promote a better public understanding of each others' attitudes and interests and to explore the possibility of more regular and perhaps more formal communications between New Zealand and the People's Republic.

> "I am hopeful that we will, before too long, receive a favourable response to our suggestion from the government in Peking".[84]

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[82] Press Statements 1972, p352, M.F.A. No. 21, 21 November, 1972

[83] Ibid.

[84] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 381, p2785, 22 September, 1972

Templeton, the member who had called for relations with China in the Address-in-Reply debate, wanted to know if the Minister was prepared to confirm that the establishment of better relations with China was regarded as a "key issue". Holyoake was certainly not prepared to go so far as that. He said he regarded the link as of "importance", but "I also consider that the retention of our existing relationship with Taiwan is of considerable importance".[85] Not of paramount importance, it seemed, but still of considerable importance. Sir Leslie Munro, a former President of the United Nations General Assembly, asked the Minister why New Zealand was "in such a hurry, having regard to our interests" to establish diplomatic representation in Peking. Holyoake replied - accurately - that he had never mentioned diplomatic recognition. He said that he was well aware that New Zealand's firm stand on Taiwan made technical recognition impossible, but he hoped that Peking might be interested in some semi-official ties.[86] In his eyes, even these were not of great importance.

The end of September saw another major diplomatic event in the Pacific: the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and the People's Republic. Japan, like Australia and New Zealand, had always been a loyal supporter of American China policy, and, apart from the United States, was the country with the closest relationship with Taiwan. Taiwan had been a Japanese colony for fifty years before 1945, and Japan had been a heavy investor in its development since. In the communique announcing the establishment of relations, the Japanese government stated that it "understood

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[85] Ibid.

[86] Ibid., p2786

and respected" the People's Republic's claim to Taiwan.

The Japanese move, however, had little public effect on the New Zealand government. In response to a question about its effect on New Zealand policy, the Prime Minister said that policy would remain unchanged, and that establishing diplomatic relations with China was "not a matter of great urgency" as far as New Zealand was concerned. As there were no substantial interests at stake, "we are in a position to deal with the matter without undue haste".[87] Here then, was the basis of New Zealand's attitude to China under the National Party government: that New Zealand had no substantial interest in an accommodation with China. It did not really matter to the National Party whether there was a dialogue between New Zealand and China or not.

A good relationship was desirable, naturally, but by no means essential. As Holyoake said on a later occasion the distance between China and New Zealand - ideologically, culturally and economically - indicated that little advantage could be obtained from attempts to move closer.[88] This view was diametrically opposed to the Labour Party's, which was that China should be recognised diplomatically to try and reduce those distances.

At the general election of November 25, 1972, the National government was defeated, and a month later the new Labour government recognised the People's Republic of China. When Parliament resumed

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[87] *Waikato Times*, 3 October, 1972, p30

[88] Interview, Sir Keith Holyoake, 17.5.74

in February, Marshall, now Leader of the Opposition, said that the action had been, in the view of the Opposition and many people in the country, "too hasty to allow for a full and planned consideration of New Zealand's best interests.[89] While Marshall agreed that in the light of the world trend towards the recognition of China, New Zealand would have followed that course sooner or later, he said that a National government would have asked to retain an appropriate association with Taiwan. The Leader of the Opposition stressed that New Zealand's trading links with Taiwan were much more valuable to her than the trading connection with the People's Republic. Marshall did not say what an "appropriate link" with Taiwan would have been, but the Party's record suggested that he meant a diplomatic link. However, Marshall went on to criticise Labour for not at least following the Canadian formula of taking note of the mainland's claim to Taiwan.

> "This sudden decision puts New Zealand clearly on the Communist side against Taiwan .. Many people in New Zealand will be concerned not so much with the recognition of China, but with the callous abandonment of Taiwan".[90]

The National Party continued to attack the abandonment of Taiwan sporadically throughout their term in Opposition, but in 1974 conceded that any new National government would not attempt to reverse the decision to recognise Peking.

Conclusion

The period 1969-1972 saw great changes in the international environment in which New Zealand formulated its China policy. New Zealand's friends and allies began changing their attitudes and

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[89] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 382, p114, 21 February, 1973

[90] Ibid.

and policies towards China at the same time that China showed signs of interest in establishing relationships with western countries. In this context, New Zealand's own attitude became increasingly more positive towards China. From 1969 onwards, policy-makers spoke of wanting to recognise China, a desire missing in previous years. China's international behaviour was no longer mentioned as a constraint on government action, leaving only Taiwan's status as an obstacle. In 1969, the Prime Minister said that it was absurd that China was outside the United Nations, and the next year he said that it was a matter of increasing urgency that China be inside. This increasingly pragmatic strain in China pronouncements, while triumphing over moral repugnance at China's international behaviour, could not prevail over one principle - the 'right' of Taiwan's government to continuing international recognition. New Zealand's government felt obliged - no matter what its desires regarding the People's Republic - to place a friendly fellow small country's interests first. By the 1970s, New Zealand had an economic interest in Taiwan to counter any security interest in developing relations with Peking.

In its attitude, New Zealand seemed to place itself mid-way between Canada's advanced position and Australia's conservative one. Australia showed little desire to come to terms with China at all. New Zealand policy did seem to run parallel to that of the United States, which from 1969, under the Nixon administration, professed itself eager to establish a relationship with the Chinese, though not at the expense of Taiwan. For all its positive noises, New Zealand did nothing about improving relations with China until its Australian and South-east Asian allies followed the Americans in

doing so in 1971. Then came attempts to get a trade mission and goodwill mission into China, and a two-China resolution in the United Nations.

CHAPTER 7

THE LABOUR PARTY AND CHINA 1961-73

Introduction

The Labour Party went into the 1960s in Opposition, still believing that Communist China should be recognised by Western countries and admitted to the United Nations as a means of gaining some influence over her. The constraints on carrying out such a policy were appreciated, and the party did not push the issue in its 1963 manifesto or in 1966. Nordmeyer, who took over the party leadership in early 1963, indicated that for him the effect on Taiwan's status was no longer a constraint, since he did not see recognition as implying recognition of China's claim to Taiwan. This was reiterated by Watt in 1965. By 1969, however, when Kirk was leader, the Labour Party had revealed itself as being very definitely in favour of a two-China policy. It now wanted to continue to recognise the government on Taiwan while recognising the People's Republic. The party at that stage differed from its opponent only in its belief that a two-China policy ought to be actively pursued. Whereas the National Party cited Communist China's known opposition to a two-China policy as adequate reason not to move towards that country, Labour was keen that negotiations should at least be initiated. Kirk believed that the withdrawal of British and American military presences from South-east Asia from 1969 onwards meant that it was important for New Zealand to establish her own relationship with powers influential in the region. In 1971, after the Australian Labor Party had been invited to China and it seemed that American policy towards China was changing, the

Labour Party urged the sending of a goodwill mission to China.

The Labour Party recognised the People's Republic of China within two weeks of its taking office in 1972. In doing so, it not only ceased to recognise the government on Taiwan, but formally acknowledged Peking's claim to the island. The Labour government was prepared to throw over the two-China policy partly because the United Nations had rejected it, and partly because the need to ensure regional peace was greater than preservation of diplomatic links with Taiwan.

During the first year in Opposition, the China issue was raised by several members in the course of the international affairs debate. Party leader Nash stated that there was no possibility of solving the disarmament problem while China remained outside the United Nations, but conceded that the necessity of preserving Formosa's place in that body was a valid obstacle.

> "We must in the long run find a way of solving the problem of China ... without sacrificing Formosa.. ... The people of Formosa, irrespective of what is said in one quarter, should not be surrendered to the mainland Government of China, and I see no reason why we should not find a way in which the Formosan people could govern themselves under some form of guarantee".[1]

Nash seemed to share the National party viewpoint that a transference of recognition from Taiwan to Peking by the United Nations would endorse the latter's claim to the former. Only a United Nations guarantee of Formosan integrity would ensure that

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[1] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 326, p224, 4 July, 1961

recognition of Communist China could be safely proceeded with.

Former Transport Minister Mathison and W.W. Freer were not concerned with constraints on China's admission, but only with the advantages of it. Mathison was sure that China's international behaviour could be modified if it were included in the United Nations.

> "I believe it would be to the advantage of all concerned if we were to admit them now. We would have some measure of control over them if they were inside; we have absolutely no control over them when they are not there. We could have discussions with them if they were there ... I believe she could be encouraged to change her outlook, and, I hope, her tactics in certain directions - particularly in respect to Tibet - if she were admitted. At least we would have the opportunity of examining her representatives and the policy she was pursuing, but at present we have no influence whatsoever because we have firmly shut the door against her".[2]

Freer had other reasons for urging action on the China question - the cause of the West in neutralist countries was one.

> "let me suggest in all seriousness that the longer China is left out of the United Nations, the greater will be the advance of Communism in some of the non-committed nations". Those nations who are today struggling for their freedom, or who have just recently obtained freedom ... do not look kindly upon those of us who would try to deny the existence of one of their own types of nations ... It does not pay us in New Zealand, as a small Pacific Power looking to the future, to close our eyes to reality and persist in refusing to recognise China. It is over to us to make the move".[3]

Freer was also convinced that China could be a valuable customer of New Zealand in the future, if political recognition were made.

> "We are worried about where we are going to find markets for our primary produce in the years which lie ahead, and yet in China, literally at our front door, one quarter of mankind is rapidly improving its standard of living ... I am certain from the observations I made while there that we

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2 Ibid. p236

3 *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 326, p276, 5 July, 1961

> could find a substantial market in China today for our milk powder and cheese; but so long as we politically isolate the people of that country, so long they will isolate us by trade".

M. Moohan, former Railways Minister, and F. Hackett, former Labour Minister, took up the point the next month with Moohan saying:

> "We cannot go on forever ignoring a country with so many potential customers",[4]

and Hackett declaring:

> "The government should give early and possibly favourable consideration to the recognition of Red China. We are standing on the sideline watching other countries trading with China, and when the time does arrive when we feel we could recognise China and establish trade posts there, we could find other countries so firmly entrenched that compared to them we would be just babes in arms".[5]

At least one senior party member seemed much less enthusiastic about the whole issue. Former Attorney-General H.G.R. Mason said bluntly:

> "I do not think it affects us very much, and I am certainly not fussing about whether we recognise China".

Mason, however, went on to criticise the American moralistic approach to the issue which had been taken up by the National government. Recognition, he said, should be based on realities, not likes and dislikes.[6]

In January, 1963, the Labour Party changed its leader, replacing Nash with A.H. Nordmeyer. In July of that year, Nordmeyer told the House of Representatives that no question was more complex and more liable to arouse greater emotion than the problem of recognising the government of mainland China. He went on to mildly

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[4] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 327, p1607, 22 August, 1961

[5] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 327, p1698, 22 August, 1961

[6] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 326, p285, 5 July, 1961

deplore the existing situation.

> "We on this side of the House believe - and indeed have for a very long time believed - that a country like China, containing as it does such a large proportion of the world's population ... is not a country which can be permanently excluded from the United Nations".[7]

If the Chinese government had been recognised and accepted at the United Nations, he said, "the drift in Chinese relations would not have developed to the extent it has".

The new Leader of the Opposition then proceeded to deny two contraints on recognition seen by the National Party, and used by the Labour Party during its period in office. First, he said, the recognition of any government did not imply approval of that government. In making this point, Nordmeyer seemed to be agreeing with Mason that China's international behaviour was irrelevant to the recognition question. Later in his speech, Nordmeyer said:

> "Whatever we may think of the actions of the Chinese government - and some of these actions in recent times are much to be deplored - the plain fact is that a country of the size, the wealth and the potentiality of China cannot for much longer remain outside the United Nations Organisation".

Nordmeyer's second point broke new ground for the party.

> "The second point is that the recognition of mainland China does not imply recognition of the claim of China to sovereignty over Formosa".

Nordmeyer with this view differed from both his National opponents and his Labour predecessor, both of whom believed that a continuing recognition of the government on Taiwan was necessary to deny China's claim to sovereignty over it. Nordmeyer was as

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[7] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 335, p408, 9 July, 1963

solicitous as they, however, for the rights of the people of Taiwan.

> "Whatever claims China may have had to Formosa - and her claims to sovereignty are not nearly as clear and definite as some of her supporters claim - there can be no suggestion that the people of Formosa should be handed over to domination and control of the Peking government. Surely the destiny of Formosa should be determined by the Formosan people themselves after a free, properly conducted and democratic election".

Despite Nordmeyer's rejection of the two public constraints the National government put on a positive China policy, the Opposition leader had not come close to advocating New Zealand's support for immediate admission of China into the United Nations. The restrained attitude was reflected in the Labour Party's manifesto for the 1963 general election, which contained a less-than-positive China clause. The clause paraphrased Nordmeyer in saying merely:

> "Labour believes that China is not a country which can be permanently excluded from the United Nations".[8]

The party apparently did not feel that New Zealand should force the issue. This could have been in deference to the electors, in view of China's belligerent image, or to the belief that New Zealand could not oppose the United States on what the latter regarded as a fundamental issue.

In October, 1963, however, W.W. Freer asked the Prime Minister in Parliament whether he would instruct New Zealand's representative to the United Nations to support the admission of all nations to the forum, since the China representation question was being discussed that week.[9]

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[8] *O.D.T.* November 6, 1963, p5

[9] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 337, p2490, 16 October, 1963

The Labour Party did not react publicly to France's diplomatic recognition of China in January, 1964, but during the year Nash decried the government's "yellow peril" thinking. The ex-party leader told the Te Awamutu Jaycees in March that Communist China was not a menace to other nations. If China had any territorial claims, he said, they were in Russia. China had been an aggressor in regard to India and Tibet, but had had some elements of suzerainty over the latter, and now had backed down in regard to India. The Labour Party would recognise China when it safeguarded Formosa's independence.[10]

The last assertion showed that there were differences in the party's senior strata about what were or were not constraints on recognition. Nordmeyer had said that recognition could be extended without prejudicing Taiwan's status, implying that no explicit guarantees were needed from Peking regarding that status.

The next year, Deputy-leader H. Watt reaffirmed the Nordmeyer contention that recognition of China could not be construed as endorsement of her claim to Taiwan. In July, he demanded to know when New Zealand was going to take some positive action on the question of United Nations membership for China.

> "We on this side of the House have for some time believed that the day is past when we can afford to have a nation the size of China outside the United Nations ... I want to know when we are going to adopt a reasonable attitude towards [this matter]. From what I have read most of the nations in the world have come to the conclusion that we cannot hope to have a reasonable peace on earth unless China is admitted to the United Nations. That does not mean we accept the form of government which China has, nor does it mean we accept that Formosa becomes part of mainland China".[11]

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[10] *O.D.T.* March 24, 1964, p12

[11] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 343, p1272, 14 July, 1965

There was no hint of a two-China policy here. Watt was not concerned at depriving Taiwan of United Nations representation, only that such deprivation not be interpreted as endorsing the Chinese Communist claim to Taiwan. The only constraint on the government that Watt saw was the attitude of the United States.

> "I cannot help wondering whether we will have to wait until the United States government decides that China should be admitted to the United Nations before the National government in this country is prepared to say it agrees".

The party's spokesman on defence, A.J. Faulkner, argued in the same debate for a positive and conciliatory approach to China.

> "I do believe that ways and means should be found to try and get alongside this tremendous giant. I believe some endeavour must be made to bring an understanding to the people of China of the western way of life ... The sooner we get alongside them, the sooner we will know what we are up against and cease to be dependent on information we cannot vouch for".[12]

The defence spokesman had said, however, that he "would not readily agree that Taiwan should necessarily be part of the People's Republic of China. I do not believe it is any more". This stand was very far from advocating a continuing recognition of Taiwan. Rather was it a qualification to be made to a recognition of Peking: there should be no falling in with any demand to endorse the claim to Taiwan.

At the end of 1965, the party changed its leader again. The new leader, N.E. Kirk, like his predecessors, believed China's influence should be contained, but that this did not mean that China should not be recognised. Kirk told the House of Representatives in 1966 that the long-term policy of New Zealand and the United States and most western countries had been for the containment of China

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[12] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 343, p1232, 13 July, 1965

behind an armed wall, but that containment should be a matter of patience, moderation and common sense.[13] The Opposition leader said that New Zealand ought not to become hysterical or emotional about problems that China as a world power posed to it or to other Western countries. In the early 'fifties everyone had been convinced that peaceful co-existence with the Soviet Union was not possible, and this had been proved wrong. The rising standard of living in Russia and the growing contentment of her people had come to be reflected in more cautious external policies.

Kirk asked if it were not possible for the change that had occurred in the Soviet Union to occur also in China. The Leader of the Opposition was more concerned to play down the significance of China's current militancy than to urge conciliatory moves.

There was no reference to China in the 1966 Labour Party election manifesto. In the 1966 election, foreign policy was an issue for perhaps the first time in New Zealand political history. The National Party was striking a responsive chord with its Vietnam policy, which involved sending military help to a government resisting Communist guerillas believed to be supplied by the Chinese, and Labour's policy of not supporting military commitment was unpopular. With the atmosphere favouring resistance to Communist advance, it was not a time to compound the party's unpopularity by advocating friendly gestures towards what was regarded as one of the enemy.

Very little was said publicly on China by the Labour Party in the years before the next election. In July, 1968, in Parliament, A.J. Faulkner briefly mentioned the matter of Chinese representation in the United Nations.

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[13] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 347, p1171, 6 July, 1966

> 'We do not have to like the Government of China - I do not - but we cannot ignore the Government of China ... by all means let us publicly criticise it harshly for what it does, but say' "The door is open for you to come to the United Nations, to become a member, to learn better ways".[14]

The moves of the Canadian government to enter into diplomatic relations with China seemed in 1969 to spark off the Labour Party's interest in the issue again. Kirk included a passage on China in his report to the party's annual conference in April, 1969, but was, however, restrained in his attitude. The Leader of the Opposition called the Canadian initiative "a most interesting development", and hoped it would presage an improvement of relationships between China and other countries.[15]

Although Kirk did not call for New Zealand to follow suit as soon as possible, he twitted the Prime Minister for having been "at some pains to labour the importance of recognising the Government of Communist China" in recent days. The Labour leader wanted to know whether this heralded a change of policy or was just a talking point. Kirk implied that it went without saying that recognition was Labour party policy.

At the conference, the party showed signs of coming to life again on the China question. A remit came forward suggesting that the government of mainland China be recognised, and this was approved by the External Affairs Committee. However an amendment by the Palmerston North and the Karori Youth branches, to add the words "even if this means breaking off relations with the Nationalist

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[14] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 355, p645, 19 July, 1968

[15] New Zealand Labour Party, *Report of 53rd Annual Conference* p26

Chinese government",[16] was lost. This was a clear indication that conference could not at that time accept the logical implications of a decision to recognise the People's Republic, and wished the party to conduct a two-Chinas policy. This was the first public indication the Labour Party had ever given that it was concerned with maintaining relations with the government on Taiwan. The Labour Party in the 'fifties had been concerned for the future of the people of Taiwan, but had wanted to protect it by a United Nations trusteeship: there was no acceptance of the Chiang Kai-shek government. Now, in the 'sixties, conference wanted to keep the party's negotiating position flexible enough to encompass a continuing recognition of the Republic of China. The Republic of China had become accepted as the government of the Taiwanese as the island took on the attributes of a viable sovereign state under its direction. The question of freedom for the Taiwanese thus became identified with the fate of the Government of the Republic of China for Labour Members of Parliament as well as National. By the 1960s, there were full diplomatic relations that would have to be broken if Peking's terms were accepted; in the 1950s, the bi-lateral links were not as strong. Kirk himself was friendly with the Republic's long-serving ambassador, Konsin Shah.[17]

Diplomatic recognition of Communist China appeared to have been relaunched on the political sea as a policy issue. However, when the election manifesto was released later in the year, it did not contain a China recognition clause. W.W. Freer claims that this

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[16] Ibid. p45

[17] Conversation with former Secretary to Prime Minister Kirk 15.8.75

was merely an oversight. The policy committee had meant for it to be included, and by some slip, it had not been. The party decided not to reprint the manifesto, as it was thought that this action would draw undue attention to the missing clause.[18]

During the election campaign of 1969, none of the major Labour candidates made any reference to China policy in their speeches. All foreign policy attention was concentrated on Vietnam. The party had, however, prepared candidates for questions on the China issue. The Research Office of the party put out a list of questions and ideal answers on Labour's foreign policy, and China policy headed the list. The relevant questions on the Research Office paper asked: What are your party's attitudes towards the recognition of China and trade with China? How far would your party go towards meeting China's conditions for United Nations entry (non-recognition of Nationalist China and all that involves)? Does your party believe in the right of the Formosan and Taiwan people to self determination?[19]

The answer to the first question was straight-forward. The text stated: "The Labour Party supports the recognition of mainland China". It went on to point out that recognition did not necessarily carry with it the endorsement of the type of government being recognised, and to declare that New Zealand would welcome increased trade with any country, "including the People's Republic of China". The paper noted that the Asian and Pacific Council had recently encouraged

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[18] Interview, 15.8.75

[19] Labour Party Research Office: *"Questions and Answers on some Aspects of Labour's Foreign Policy"* Wellington, 28 October, 1969

a Thai proposal to attempt to open discussions with Peking, and said that the party "would support such moves for reasons of increased trade and closer understanding". The paper also declared that Labour would seek positive steps to have mainland China seated in the United Nations.

In answer to the last two questions, the paper stated that Labour believed that "Taiwan is entitled to separate representation at the United Nations" and that all people were entitled to self-determination.[20]

The Research Office paper confirmed the indication given by the party conference in April that Labour was now in favour of a two-Chinas policy. The party had declared that it could not agree to depriving Nationalist China of its United Nations representation.

On the basis of the Research Office's paper, the Labour party would have been unable to vote for the Albanian resolution in the United Nations had it been elected in 1969. Since 1963, Albania had sponsored the annual resolution at the United Nations to admit the Peking government and expel the Nationalist representatives. The Labour Party was, however, committed to putting forward an alternative means of bringing Communist China into the United Nations.

China policy was discussed in the first session of the new Parliament in 1970 and Labour members gave more indications that Labour policy towards China differed from National's only in the enthusiasm for Communist China. Backbencher J.A. Hunt put before the House a twelve-point plan for New Zealand's foreign policy in the nineteen-seventies. One point was a call for the government

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[20] Ibid.

to recognise Communist China, while at the same time preserving Taiwan's independence.[21] This was not necessarily a call for a two-China policy, but a reiteration of the traditional Labour policy of not conceding the Communist claim to Taiwan when recognising the mainland. A more senior party spokesman, however, Arthur Faulkner, believed that a double recognition could be negotiated. "If it is not possible for New Zealand to recognise Red China and Taiwan, why is it possible for the United Kingdom to do so?"[22] On being informed by the Prime Minister that Britain had not been able to recognise both Chinas, and being rebuked for advocating the impossible, Faulkner did not retreat. He replied that he had said that New Zealand should attempt to recognise on a two-China basis.[23] Faulkner's quarrel with the government was not that it refused to throw over Taiwan for the People's Republic, but that it would not even try for a two-China recognition, conceding the hopelessness of it too quickly. Faulkner said:

> "We should take up an attitude that Red China should be seated at the United Nations, not that Taiwan should lose its membership. We should take a positive line".[24]

Faulkner argued that recognition of Communist China was in New Zealand's interests. It would be a small but useful move towards de-escalating tension in an area of importance to New Zealand.

> "We do not have to like the government, but we should recognise it. It is in our area of influence, and any influence of a peaceful nature that we can bring to bear on 700,000,000 people in our area of responsibility must be in the best interests of this country ... I do not think there is any obligation on us as a country to take up the prejudices of other countries and other times".[25]

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[21] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 365, p566, 17 April, 1970

[22] *N.Z.P.D* vol. 365, p511, 16 April, 1970

[23] Ibid. p575

[24] Ibid. p511

[25] Ibid.

Faulkner did not see the American alliance as a constraint in the issue. He went on to say that recognition would mean that New Zealand's thinking was being reoriented towards reality rather than political expediency.

Kirk did not contribute anything on China policy on this occasion, but in September 1970, speaking to the Oamaru Rotary Club, he said that it was "just nonsense" that China was not recognised, and that it was wrong that several hundred million people should be excluded from the United Nations. The Leader of the Opposition doubted whether China wanted to join the United Nations, but he said he believed that the Western world had to come to terms with her. Then, he provided proof positive that Labour had a two-China policy by saying that the Western world had to recognise that there were two separate Chinese identities and two separate governments - Communist China and Nationalist China.[26]

Labour's desire to continue recognition of Taiwan probably accounted for the absence of favourable public comment the next month when Canada recognised the People's Republic. Canada broke relations with Taiwan while refusing to endorse the Communist claim to the island. In earlier days, this might have been enough for the Labour Party. Now, however, there was no urging that New Zealand follow suit. The Canadian recognition, however, and the flurry of moves by European countries to follow in Canada's footsteps, were signs that the international environment was changing.

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[26] *N.Z.H.* September 2, 1970.

In April, 1971, the Australian Labor Party announced that it had applied to China to send a delegation there "to discuss the terms on which your country is interested in having diplomatic and trade relations with Australia".[27]

The New Zealand Labour Party felt that it was time New Zealand took advantage of changing circumstances. Speaking at the University of Auckland in April, Labour's finance spokesman, R.J. Tizard, stated categorically that the Labour Party would recognise Communist China if elected the government in 1972, and then went on to say that if New Zealand waited until then to recognise, much valuable time in establishing trade arrangements would have been lost. Economic imperatives seemed to be uppermost in his thoughts. Canada, he said, had benefitted in its trade with China by recognising the Maoist regime, and more nations would be following suit. "New Zealand just can't afford to wait until 1972 to recognise Communist China because by then we will be about seventeenth in the queue", he said.[28]

The party's number three-ranker, W.W. Freer, was just as interested in New Zealand's facing up to changed political realities as he was with trade opportunities, although he did not ignore the latter. In an article for the Otago Daily Times, he said:

> "We cannot afford to allow a situation to develop where the United States is prepared to change its political thinking, while we remain in isolation as the last country prepared to face the reality of China's existence".[29]

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[27] Fitzgerald, S. "*Talking with China: The ALP visit and Peking's Foreign Policy*" p11

[28] *O.D.T.* April 22, 1971, p3

[29] *O.D.T.* April 30, 1971, p4

At least one senior member of the party believed that President Nixon's trade relaxation moves meant an end to the containment of China, and that New Zealand was now free of one of the largest constraints against its acting - the fear of acting against its allies interests.

In this changed situation Freer did not wish to see New Zealand out in the cold. Even at this stage, however, Freer was concerned with Taiwan's position.

> "The Labour Party has long subscribed to the view that Peking must be recognised and admitted to the United Nations. At the same time, it is agreed that relationships with Taiwan should be continued; in effect, the acceptance of a two-China principle. Whether such a policy will be acceptable in either Peking or Taipei is a matter which the government must clarify. This cannot be done without discussion between all parties concerned, nor can it be left to others to interpret the mood of either nation to us".

National Party spokesmen had justified their inability to implement a two-China policy for years by saying that it was known to be unacceptable to both Taipei and Peking, but Freer wanted some direct proof. There ought to be some contact with Communist China to see just what it would accept in New Zealand's case. Freer did not think that the government should rely on the experiences of others.

Freer did not think that trade prospects could be improved without some political accommodation. "To a large extent, but not completely, trade is affected by politics in China ... to make any major progress, improved political attitudes will be essential".

In May came the Labour Party conference. The conference endorsed a remit that called on the next Labour government to initiate negotiations with the People's Republic of China for the purpose of establishing full trade and diplomatic relations, and to support China's entry into the United Nations. The conference also called on

the Prime Minister to organise immediately a goodwill visit to the People's Republic, and said that if the government declined to act, the Labour Party would do so.[30]

The idea of the goodwill mission was probably stimulated by the Australian Labor Party's organisation of one. The statement was made on behalf of the party by Freer, who said that because of the changing tempo of relationships, it was a matter of urgency that immediate steps be taken, preferably at governmental level, to improve contacts between China and New Zealand. Freer made the point that, as the Australian government had agreed to start a dialogue with China, it was essential that New Zealand should not continue to ignore her - both as a Pacific power and a nation with tremendous trading potential. "The potential markets for much of our primary production and for the pulp and paper industry are tremendous ... nor can there be any progress without a basis of goodwill and understanding being established between the two countries". Freer reassured the conference:

> "Let me make it perfectly clear that as soon as the Labour Party becomes the government, it will commence negotiations with Peking with a view to establishing diplomatic relationships".[31]

Freer assumed that New Zealand, in its foreign policy, had to work in tandem with Australia, if not the United States, and once the Australian government had swallowed its hostility to China, New Zealand must do the same.

Despite Freer's rather dramatic ultimatum to the government from the conference floor, party leader Kirk rather strangely made no

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[30] *O.D.T.* May 27, 1971, p5

[31] NZLP *Report of 55th Conference* p34

mention of China at all in the External Affairs section of his Parliamentary party report to conference.

On the day after the conference had issued its China statement, the Prime Minister made a lengthy statement of his own on China policy, but nowhere in it did he make any mention of an intention to send a goodwill mission. On June 4, then, the Labour Party sent a formal letter to the Secretary-General of the Chinese People's Institute for Foreign Affairs in Peking, informing him of a request made to the New Zealand Government by the Labour Party to send a goodwill mission to China. "This letter", Mr Freer revealed later, "was prompted by the fact that the Prime Minister had not taken any positive action at that time towards organising such a visit".[32]

The letter was "to ascertain whether a small goodwill mission would, in fact, be welcome".

In early July the Australian Labor Party delegation arrived in China and discussed the terms of diplomatic recognition with the Chinese Foreign Minister. The Australians told the Chinese that a Labour government would propose to recognise on terms identical to those which Canada had negotiated. The Chinese claim to Taiwan would be noted, but not endorsed or challenged. Whitlam told Chou En-lai that a Labour government would not support "two Chinas" in the United Nations or elsewhere, and that the Australian Embassy on Taiwan would be withdrawn.[33] In view of Freer's hope, stated in April, that relations with Taiwan could be preserved, the Australian Labor Party's position would seem to have been in advance of New Zealand's.

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[32] *N.Z.H.* 15 July, 1971, p3

[33] Fitzgerald, Op. Cit., p19

In an important speech to the Auckland branch of the New Zealand Institute of International Affairs in June, 1971, Kirk said that changes in Great Power policies in Asia, and the resultant changes in the balance of power in the region, meant that New Zealand had to develop new policies to protect its interests there. The United States and Britain were both withdrawing militarily from South-east Asia, while the Soviet Union and China were attempting to increase their influence there. China was seeking "a more persuasive role" in the region, and this, coupled with the Nixon doctrine, probably meant that Sino-American relations would improve. China was likely to be admitted to the United Nations soon. Kirk believed that New Zealand should welcome the changes as "an opportunity for enlightened and outward-looking policies", designed to promote regional co-operation.

> "We should set about policies designed to show and develop in every way that we are sincerely interested in Asia ... that we are not .. a country on the perimeter of Asia, but a country that sees its future in association with Asian countries".[34]

When the Leader of the Opposition turned to specific policies, he made no mention of future China policy. The theme of his speech, however, presaged efforts to develop a relationship with China.

In mid-July President Nixon surprised the world by announcing his intention to visit China the following year. Parliament was sitting, but there was no move by the Labour Party to urge negotiations for recognition. Only W.W. Freer, the perennial champion of China in the party ranks, made the point that New Zealand was now free of the American constraint in its dealings with China. Referring to

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[34] Kirk, N. *New Zealand and Its Neighbours* p10.

the Nixon announcement, Freer said that the Labour Party had tried to get the government to do something about China in May, stressing "that the matter was urgent because all nations in the Western Hemisphere had been moving towards a closer dialogue with China".[35] Implying that the government had been worried about the effects of a China move on the American alliance, Freer stated that if New Zealand's point of view had been important in the eyes of the Western world, it would have been consulted on the American action. The alliance against China was dead, and the Americans did not really care what New Zealand did in this area. There was no reason now to hold back.

Kirk called Nixon's acceptance of the Chinese invitation a "welcome initiative". He said that it must be regarded as an attempt to come to terms with reality, and as such was an example that every country could follow. The American move endorsed the line the Labour Party had been advocating for some time, and he hoped that it would prompt the New Zealand government to follow the course the Labour Party had urged upon it in May. It was regrettable that the Prime Minister had not taken the initiative earlier.[36]

The Labour Party was not interested in making China a party political issue, along the lines of the Australian Labor Party. True to the New Zealand tradition of bi-partisanship in foreign affairs, it wanted the government to take action in the China field. When the Chinese replied to the Labour Party's letter, they extended an invitation to a party delegation to make the trip, along the lines of the Australian Labor Party mission.

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[35] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 373, p2003, 20 July, 1971

[36] *Evening Post* 17 July, 1971, p1

This invitation was declined.[37] The party did not want the proposed mission to be of their political colour only. It preferred that any delegation be drawn from a variety of sources, representing New Zealand. The party would not have been unmindful of the fact that this would minimise any undesirable political consequences at home. The political risks of a Labor Party mission to China had been thrashed out in Australia before Whitlam went: it is possible, even probable, that New Zealand Labour saw them as too high. The Leader of the Opposition said publicly that he felt that any mission to China could do more for New Zealand if it had an official character. He said this in response to a suggestion that the Chinese were more likely to invite a Labour Party team to China than a government-sponsored mission.[38]

The next significant development in the China field was the American decision to support the admission of the People's Republic to the United Nations. Kirk called this "a major step and a courageous one", and said that it underlined the serious intention of the Nixon administration to try to improve relationships with China. He predicted that the Chinese would be certain now to win membership. The Leader of the Opposition saw the decision as "courageous" because it involved problems "not only so far as the Government of Taiwan is concerned, but because of the effect on the relationships between some South-east Asian countries". Kirk went on to say that the American decision was a reminder to New Zealand that there was some scope for independence and initiative in foreign policy, and it seemed

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[37] Interview, W.W. Freer, 15.8.75

[38] *Christchurch Star* 19 July, 1971

a pity that New Zealand was going to appear in a 'me-too' role again, and "be swept into line by the coat-tails of others". Kirk said he thought there would be satisfaction in many people's minds if China entered the United Nations and took part in its responsibilities and activities.[39]

In October, New Zealand and the United States failed to prevent the expulsion of the Taiwan government from the United Nations when Peking was admitted.

The admittance of Peking to the United Nations and the expulsion of Taiwan was apparently a turning point for Labour Party policy. In party eyes, Peking's acceptance by the world community at Taiwan's expense dealt the two-China policy a fatal blow. Kirk was to say in February, 1973:

> "Once the United Nations had recognised Peking as the sole legal Government of China .. the time had arrived for a clear decision"[40]

The decision was to not insist on maintaining relations with Taiwan. The United Nations - an institution dear to Labour Party hearts - had given a sort of moral sanction to the abandonment of Taipeh. New Zealand would not be stepping out of line in granting recognition on Peking's terms. It would be going with the crowd.

In a speech to the Invercargill Rotary Club on November 1, 1971, the Leader of the Opposition said that the United Nations decision to seat China and as a consequence dislodge Taiwan was an endorsement of a One-China policy, and a One-China approach implied

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[39] *Press*, (Christchurch) August 4, 1971

[40] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 382, p81, 21 February, 1973

an international acceptance that the Taiwan question was for China a domestic issue.[41] Kirk said that New Zealand had been interested in sending a goodwill mission to China prior to the United Nations decision, but this policy had been overtaken by events. "Now the larger question of the recognition of the government of China arises". Kirk believed that it would be absurd for New Zealand to recognise the representatives of the People's Republic at the United Nations but not elsewhere, as the representatives of China. Recognition was now an essential element in improving relationships with China, and should be done even if "other priorities for the establishment of posts means that an exchange of representatives would be further on into the future".[42]

The Leader of the Opposition still did not publicly advocate the cutting of links with Taiwan. He said that while China might not regard New Zealand's continuing recognition of Taiwan with favour, that was not an adequate reason for New Zealand's failing to take early action to indicate to China that it was prepared to recognise it.

> "A clear indication that New Zealand is prepared to recognise the Government of China would be valuable indications [sic] of New Zealand's desire to improve relations with other countries. The aim to work for better relationships is not just something for others. It is for us too. When should we act? At least early enough to show that the policy proposed is being taken as a New Zealand initiative".

Kirk did recognise that "at this time the policy of China towards Taiwan is firm and unchanged". The implication was that it might change.

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[41] Labour Party Research Unit. Transcript of Norman Kirk's speech to Invercargill Rotary Club. 1 November, 1971, p33

[42] Ibid. p4

The Leader of the Opposition had placed his China remarks in the context of a plea for a foreign policy of initiative on New Zealand's part. Kirk said that the fate of the Asian-Pacific region after the end of the war in Vietnam depended not only on the changing attitudes and policies of the four great powers currently involved there, but also on the response and determination of small nations. He disavowed the necessity for New Zealand's policies to be a by-product of Great Power policies. The Labour Party leader finished up by declaring that

> "the smallness of a country was neither an excuse nor a reason for failing to develop vigorous constructive and successful initiatives aimed at improving relationships with neighbours".

On the China question, of course, New Zealand governments of both colours had for years refused to take initiatives, preferring not to move beyond the positions of the country's allies.

A few days after this speech, a special correspondent for the *Auckland Star* stated that Labour's China policy was becoming "more sharply defined". In the past, the report said, "Mr Kirk has lagged far behind the enthusiasm of his Australian opposite number, Mr Whitlam - mainly because he did not want to walk out on Taiwan. But now he believes a situation could now be created in which China would not take too hard a line towards Taiwan - or countries wishing to maintain links there". [43]

The *Star* correspondent said that Kirk reasoned that if New Zealand was the first small country to approach Peking and show

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[43] *Auckland Star* 6 November, 1971, p3 "Expect Fireworks in Foreign Affairs Soon" by Jack Tresidder

positive interest in recognising the Communist government, China might not want to impose impossible conditions. In any case, New Zealand could lose nothing by making the approach.

Kirk elaborated on his Invercargill remarks in a 'Point of View' broadcast for the New Zealand Broadcasting Corporation a week later. The Leader of the Opposition said that it was recognised that China's admission to the United Nations meant that a number of nations would be reappraising their attitude to the formal recognition of China, and

> "since good relationships are vital to New Zealand throughout the region, I don't know of any reason why we shouldn't act earlier rather than later to make it known that we would be prepared as a country to recognise the Government of China".[44]

That, he said, did not presuppose an early exchange of representatives, but it would establish some contact other than just at the United Nations. Kirk asked whether it was better for New Zealand to wait until other countries - presumably meaning the United States, Japan and Australia - had taken this step, then "sort of fall into line and look as though we are being dragged in a backwash of everyone else's action", or whether New Zealand should start to express her own national interests "and see that these lie in the sort of relationships that we can build through the Asian region".

Despite Kirk's concern that New Zealand should act quickly the party did not press the issue for the rest of its time in Opposition. The *Auckland Star* reported that Kirk was likely to seek a special debate centred on the recognition of China,[45] but this did not happen.

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[44] Labour Party Research Unit - Transcript, "Point of View" Broadcast, Sunday, November 17, 1971, p46

[45] *Auckland Star* 6 November, 1971, p3

When the Labour Party conference was held in May, 1972, one remit made an attempt to commit the party to the protection of Taiwan's undetermined status. Remit 11b suggested that a Labour government recognise "the right of the people of Taiwan to self-determination". Although this was completely in line with what had been party policy until that point, and had been the basis of the Canadian recognition, the relevant committee recommended that the remit be rejected because of its "vagueness".[46] A new note of practicality seemed to be moving into the party's deliberations on China. Vague or not, a commitment to Taiwan would have reduced the party's room to manoeuvre in negotiations for diplomatic recognition, and recent events had shown that the Canadian formula was no longer acceptable to the Chinese. In March, Britain had been forced to acknowledge that Taiwan was a province of the People's Republic in order to upgrade its level of representation in China. Since 1954, British representation had been at Chargé d'Affaires level only, because Britain kept a consulate on Taiwan. Now the consulate was to be withdrawn. The rejection of the remit signalled that a fundamental change had taken place in Labour's policy. Vague or not, impractical or not, the principle of the people of Taiwan's right to determine their own future had been part of Labour's credo for nearly two decades. When the policy manifesto came out, a pledge to recognise the People's Republic was there again for the first time since 1954, but there was no mention of Taiwan.

China was not a prominent issue in the 1972 election campaign, although one other party - the new Values Party - also had a pledge

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[46] New Zealand Labour Party - *Report of the 56th Annual Conference* p52

to recognise the People's Republic in its manifesto. The Values pledge was specific on the point of Taiwan. The clause stated that recognition would be pursued, if need be, at the expense of severance of diplomatic relations with Taiwan. The Values manifesto claimed that the Labour Party's policy on China was obscure, and that the last policy statement made by the party was ambiguous.[47]

On November 25, the Labour Party decisively won the general election, taking fifteen seats from National to end up with a huge majority of 23.

The new Labour Prime Minister thus had at the beginning one definite advantage in decision-making over his Labour counterpart of 1957 - a solid mandate at the polls. Instead of clinging precariously to power as Nash's government had, Kirk's victory had been such as to seem to guarantee him a second term.

Kirk, as had been expected, not only assumed the Prime Minister's office, but became Minister of Foreign Affairs as well. Interviewed a few days after the election, Kirk's only mention of the China question was to say that the Labour government hoped to go on with the goodwill mission to China that had been in train under the previous government.[48]

A week after the Labour government was elected, but before it had assumed office, it gained an ideological ally across the Tasman when the Australian Labor Party won the general election in Australia. The Leader of the Australian Labor Party had

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[47] New Zealand Values Party *Blueprint for New Zealand - An Alternative Future* p50

[48] *Waikato Times*, 28 November, 1972, p5

proclaimed during the election campaign that recognition of the People's Republic of China would be the first act of a Labor government in the foreign affairs field. The Australian Labor Party's victory meant that New Zealand would have the active support of one of her close allies in making any change in her China policy. Any prior recognition of China by Australia would be a powerful stimulus for New Zealand to follow suit.

The Prime Minister did not seem to be inclined to rush recognition. In an interview conducted sometime in mid-December, but not published until December 27, Kirk said that although the government was committed to a policy of recognising the People's Republic, "we will proceed at a slower pace than Australia. Obviously, there will have to be preliminaries to any recognition of China. Mr Whitlam has been to China, and we will discuss the situation when we meet next month".[49]

Asked about New Zealand's future relations with Taiwan, Kirk said: "This is a difficult problem, but it would be part of the task of a goodwill mission to explore what is possible to solve it. We don't want to worsen any relations, but to improve them. The two Chinas themselves must be thinking and working on their own conclusions, and it may not be the problem it now appears. We would approach a goodwill visit as a prelude to recognition of China and an exploratory look at Taiwan".[50]

Early in the month, then, Kirk appeared to see recognition coming after the goodwill visit to China, which had been tentatively

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[49] *Wairarapa Times-Age* December 27, 1972, p13 (In Labour Party Research Unit files)

[50] Ibid.

scheduled by the previous government for February. He did not seem to envisage an abrupt parting from Taiwan.

Yet on December 22, 1972, with surprising suddenness, New Zealand's recognition of the People's Republic of China was announced. It was only two weeks after the government had taken office, and there had been no hint that negotiations were under way. Prime Minister Kirk, unlike his Australian counterpart, had not at any stage declared that recognition was a matter of the highest priority, to be negotiated and announced as soon as possible. The fact that New Zealand's recognition was simultaneous with Australia's suggested that the New Zealand government had been carried along by the Australian government's urgency, although Ministry of Foreign Affairs sources were reported as saying that the simultaneous announcement was largely co-incidental. The sources claimed that rather than tagging along with Australia, the New Zealand government had decided on the early move before the Australian government was elected. The matter had been taken before the first Cabinet meetings and the Ministry instructed to act.[51]

The *Christchurch Star* however, reported that the Ministry had been instructed to act in the week after the elections - long before the time Cabinet could first meet. The New Zealand representative at the United Nations had immediately contacted the Chinese representative and the reply had come back "within a week" that Peking would accept the New Zealand initiative.[52]

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[51] *Waikato Times* December 23, 1972, p5

[52] *Christchurch Star* 23 December, 1972

In support of the claim that New Zealand had acted independently of Australia, the Ministry sources had pointed out that New Zealand and Australia had not done their negotiating together: New Zealand had worked through the Chinese representative at the United Nations, while Australia had used the Chinese Embassy in Paris. The negotiations took about a week, the report said.

S.W. Greif claims, without giving any sources, that the decision to recognise came at Australia's urging, and without reference to Cabinet.[53] Sir Keith Holyoake, speaking in Parliament in March, 1973, had no doubt that this was so.

> "It made it quite clear to the world that New Zealand was acting as the jackal to the new Australian government's lion .... the Australian Prime Minister was in a hurry and the New Zealand Labour government was just dragged along willy-nilly".[54]

Kirk himself gave credence to this view saying in his introduction to the 1973 Annual Report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that

> "we took our decision to recognise China independently, but implemented it in close consultation with Australia".[55]

Warren Freer in 1975 said that there was no question of New Zealand's having been persuaded to recognise, but there had been agreement on timing.[56]

In explanation of the suddenness of New Zealand's recognition, the Prime Minister said that there was "no point in delaying about such a fundamental issue".[57] He declined to answer questions on

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[53] Greif, S.W. "*The Overseas Chinese in New Zealand*" p170

[54] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 382, p595, 7 March, 1973

[55] *Annual Report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1973* p9

[56] Interview, 15.8.75

[57] *Waikato Times* December, 23, 1972, p5

the move, declined requests for a Press conference, and refused to appear on radio and television about it. These moves were interpreted in Wellington as an effort to play down the decision, one paper reported. Kirk did not wish to rub salt into the diplomatic wounds of the Nationalist Chinese Ambassador.[58]

The *Christchurch Star* said that it was known that Mr Kirk was unhappy that recognition meant severing ties with Taiwan, but accepted that it was inevitable. This unhappiness was shared by some of his colleagues, and indeed Greif claims that Kirk's swift, unheralded decision was made that way to avoid intra-party conflict. "Within the Cabinet were many staunch enemies of Peking and some friends of Taiwan".[59]

The justification for the recognition of China came in a policy statement issued the same day as the recognition was announced, entitled "New Zealand and the World in the 1970s". The statement began by saying that recently there had been a profound change in the international situation, particularly in Asia. Cold War confrontation had given way to negotiation. As part of the change, China was seeking more normal relations with other countries. Confrontation had ended "essentially because the Great Powers are disengaging themselves from areas of actual or potential conflict". The four powers involved in the affairs of Asia and the Pacific expected their friends to look after themselves more than in the past. In this situation, New Zealand had to be ready and able to look after her own interests.

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[58] *Christchurch Star* December 23, 1972

[59] Greif, S.W. "*The Overseas Chinese in New Zealand*" p170

"We must in future be more self-reliant".[60] In other words, the British and Americans were leaving South-east Asia, and it was necessary for New Zealand to come to her own terms with the region and the powers that influenced it. Kirk said that in the new situation it was "essential" for a small country like New Zealand to be in a position to deal with all four powers - that is, China, the Soviet Union, the U.S.A. and Japan.

> "We must keep ourselves informed of what they are thinking and doing. Our national interests also require that we have the means of making our views known and getting them heard by the great powers. To do this, we must have effective diplomatic representation in all four capitals".

The statement moved on to a consideration of China in particular.

> "China has now entered the mainstream of world affairs. It is playing an active part in the United Nations. In Asia and the Pacific its influence is great and bound to grow. It is logical and sensible for New Zealand to recognise the People's Republic of China and [to] enter into normal relations with it".

Finally, there was an assurance that trade with Taiwan would not suffer.

> "Recognition of Peking will be accompanied by the termination of diplomatic relations with Taiwan. Non-official contacts, will, however, be maintained so that our trade with Taiwan will continue to expand".

This point was stressed again in February, 1973.

> "What was done was precisely what was undertaken by Japan. Japan removed diplomatic recognition and diplomatic relationships were stopped, but [other] relationships were not stopped. So long as those relationships are carried on by private firms and private individuals, there is nothing to prevent thriving trade and a continuing relationship with the people of Taiwan".[61]

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[60] *N.Z.F.A.R.* December, 1972, p12

[61] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 382, p121, 21 February, 1973

In the communique announcing the establishment of diplomatic relations, New Zealand acknowledged Peking's claim that Taiwan was an inalienable part of China and that it was a province of the People's Republic of China. This was criticised by the Opposition which felt that if recognition were to be afforded, it should at least have been on the Canadian basis of making no comment one way or the other on the Peking government's claim to Taiwan. On February 27, 1973, J.F. Luxton asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs in Parliament:

> "In the light of the importance of the principle of self-determination for small nations like New Zealand, why did the Labour government not consider taking note of the claim of the People's Republic of China instead of acknowledging that claim?"[62]

In reply, the Prime Minister said that, first, the Chinese were no longer prepared to accept the Canadian formula, and that therefore the government had had no option but to acknowledge Peking's claim if it wanted to recognise China; and that secondly, the government saw no objection to acknowledging that claim when the authorities in Taiwan themselves considered Taiwan to be part of China.[63]

The authorities on Taiwan might have regarded Taiwan as Chinese, but they did not see it as part of the People's Republic. Labour's policy had always been to deny the Communist claim to Taiwan on behalf of the non-Communist people of the island. During all this time, the Nationalist Chinese government had not ceased to say that Taiwan was part of China. In the 1950s, the Labour Party had not been concerned with the views of the Nationalist

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[62] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 382, p246, 27 February, 1973

[63] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 382, p246, 27 February, 1973

Chinese government on the status of Taiwan, anyway. Taiwan's status was undefined, and the Nationalist government not regarded as its legitimate government. In the 1960s, the Nationalist government had come to be accepted as the legitimate Government of Taiwan only. The Republic of China was not China, just as the German Democratic Republic was not the government of all Germany.

Luxton harked back to Labour's previous concern when he asked: "Does the Prime Minister consider that between 15,000,000 and 16,000,000 people living in Taiwan should have the freedom to choose what their future is?"[64] Kirk replied that the question was hardly relevant, since "the government in Taiwan has never yet been willing to give the 12,000,000 native Taiwanese the right to decide their future.[65] This was true enough, but had never been mentioned by Labour previously. Whether or not the Taiwanese had the freedom to rid themselves of the Nationalist government, both New Zealand political parties had always defended their right not to come under the sway of the Communist government. In the 1960s Labour seemed to accept the Taiwan government, and its policy of opposition to the People's Republic, as representative of the wishes of the Taiwanese.

The belief that the future of the non-Communist people of Taiwan should not be mortgaged, even in principle, to the mainland government had been a major constraint on Nash's desire to recognise the People's Republic. Twelve years later, to Kirk, the belief had no relevance.

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[64] Ibid.

[65] Ibid.

When the National Party's P.I. Wilkinson asked what the Labour government's attitude would be if Communist China sought to assert the claim to Taiwan with force, Kirk rather surprisingly pointed out that Taiwan still had a mutual security treaty with the United States.[66] The Prime Minister thereby implied that New Zealand did not, in spirit, accept the People's Republic's claim to Taiwan, and had been prepared to concede the claim at least partly because it could not be enforced. The acknowledgement of Communist China's claim to Taiwan had been an expedient move. Kirk could have replied that Peking was entitled to assert her rights by any means she saw fit, or that New Zealand had no opinion on the matter.

In defending himself against charges of callously abandoning Taiwan, however, Kirk strongly denied that New Zealand had any obligations to Taiwan.

> "At no point under a treaty or under any other arrangement has New Zealand accepted any obligation whatever to assist Taiwan in the event of being attacked".[67]

As long as United States troops were stationed on Taiwan, however, it could be argued that New Zealand would be obliged to aid them under the ANZUS treaty. Kirk's statement, although accurately saying there had been no legal abandonment, did indicate a moral abandonment. The Prime Minister could well have quoted the Palmerstonian doctrine that a nation has no permanent friends or enemies, just permanent interests.

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[66] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 382, p246, 27 February, 1973

[67] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 382, p121, 21 February, 1973

The pragmatic attitude of the Labour government to the Taiwan -China issue was expressed by the Associate Minister of Foreign Affairs, J.A. Walding, in March.

> "Whether or not [the members opposite] talk about 'acknowledging' or 'taking note of' Taiwan, they are only playing with words. It is true that the Canadians made an exception. They recognised the People's Republic of China and took note of the claims of [sic] Taiwan. However, it is a plain fact that every country that has recognised Mainland China has followed the procedure of breaking off diplomatic relations with Taiwan".[68]

Walding believed that the formula used was irrelevant because the end result was the same. The change in formula meant, however, that the principle of self-determination for Taiwan was being abandoned.

For the Labour government a link with China in the post-Vietnam era was a greater national interest than preserving diplomatic links with Taiwan. Kirk saw New Zealand's move to initiate a dialogue with the People's Republic as the forerunner, he hoped, of a movement among all Asian nations to come to terms with China. New Zealand's future role in the region, he believed, was to encourage the nations of South-east Asia to enter into relationships with China in order to eliminate causes of conflict that might draw other powers into Asia on one side or the other. The South-east Asian countries' fear of China had been instrumental in involving other powers in the area. In his introduction to the Annual Report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1973, Kirk said:

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[68] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 382, p669, 8 March, 1973

> "It remains our long-term aim to bring about a reconciliation between countries that have been divided by the conflicts of the past generation, and especially between the countries of South-east Asia on the one hand and China on the other. China is so big and important a country, so close to South-east Asia, and so deeply involved in its affairs that peace can hardly be achieved without its co-operation. Its actions have a profound influence on the course of events throughout the area".[69]

The role that Kirk proposed for New Zealand was the opposite of the one practised by the previous Labour government, which was to prevent the free Asian governments from falling into too close a relationship with China.

Just as Nash had been convinced that New Zealand's recognition might encourage Asian governments to consider the same course, with disastrous results for them and ultimately for New Zealand, so Kirk now hoped that a New Zealand recognition would point the way for the South-east Asian nations to do likewise - with beneficial results. Writing in the New Zealand supplement of the Far Eastern Economic Review in 1973, the Prime Minister said:

> "The countries of the [Asian-Pacific] area must come to terms with China, each in its own way and its own time. I hope that New Zealand has contributed something to this process by the establishment of diplomatic relations".[70]

Kirk was enabled to take the step of establishing diplomatic relations with China because his government was free of the constraints that inhibited his predecessor. The international political climate was favourable, as it had not been to Nash: China was actively seeking relationships with Western countries, and had established them with Commonwealth and NATO friends of New Zealand. United States policy

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[69] *A.R.M.F.A.* 1973 AJHR A-1 p9

[70] *Far Eastern Economic Review* August 6, 1973 - New Zealand and Asia Focus p3.

was no longer to prevent the establishment of relations with China, and the United States was actively seeking its own links there. The South-east Asian countries were no longer likely to lose confidence in Western military support against China, since the support was no longer there. After the United Nations had rejected a Two-Chinas policy, the protection of Taiwan's status did not have the same importance.

Conclusion

The Labour Party went into the 1960s as an Opposition party once more, believing that China should be recognised and admitted to the United Nations as an aid to peace, but conscious now of several constraints to the party's implementation of such a policy. Nash had found strong American objections, China's international behaviour, and the status of Taiwan, obstacles. The party under Nash believed that recognition without some prior agreement would be tantamount to acknowledging China's claim to Taiwan.

Under Nash's successor Nordmeyer, from early 1963 to late 1965, the party appeared to dispose of two constraints - those of China's international behaviour, and of the effect on Taiwan's position. China's recognition could not be tied up with questions of moral approval, Nordmeyer said, and recognition did not imply anything about the People's Republic's claim to Taiwan. Thus it seemed that only the American constraint was still operative, as well as that of public opinion, which was linked to China's international behaviour. Labour's election manifesto of 1963 did not assert itself on the Chinese issue, and the 1966 manifesto did not mention it at all.

In 1969, when the issue of China revived on the international scene, the Labour Party, now under Kirk, showed itself to be in favour of a two-China policy. The 1969 annual conference refused to pass a remit amendment that said recognition should go ahead even if it meant breaking off relations with Taiwan, and the Research Office brief for candidates on the issue for the 1969 election indicated that Labour favoured separate representation for Taiwan at the United Nations and would not accede to the Albanian resolution to admit Peking at Taiwan's expense. Kirk, in September 1970, told the Oamaru Rotary Club that the Western world had to recognise that there were two separate Chinese governments. The Labour Party's difference with the Nationalists was its eagerness to initiate negotiations with the Communists despite the knowledge of the Chinese stand on recognising Taiwan. This eagerness became more apparent after it became evident that the United States policy was changing.

At no time during this period, however, did the Labour Party urge the government to recognise Peking: it urged a goodwill mission.

The entry of China into the United Nations at Taiwan's expense was recognised as being a heavy blow to the maintenance of a two-China policy, but even while accepting that diplomatic relations with Taiwan would probably have to be severed to establish them with Peking, the Labour Party continued to hope that something might be worked out. Kirk indicated at this time that he thought it essential that New Zealand established relations with Peking once the Great Powers' policies in Asia had changed. New Zealand had to establish her own relationships with countries influential in the region, once her powerful friends ceased to look after her interests there.

When the Labour Party won the general election of 1972, the Prime Minister initially seemed to regard recognition of Peking as something that would be negotiated over a reasonable period of time. However, diplomatic recognition of Peking was made surprisingly suddenly, two weeks after the party assumed office, and was announced in conjunction with Australian recognition. It would seem likely that the New Zealand government was hurried into recognition by the Australian government. In acknowledging Peking's claim to Taiwan, Labour sacrificed one of its principles - that the People of Taiwan were entitled to a separate existence - in the service of *realpolitik*. Upholding a right that was not likely to be threatened was now considered less important for New Zealand than finally coming to terms with a power that greatly influenced an area of importance to New Zealand. The future of South-east Asia once more was a determinant of China policy.

PART II

THE SHADOW OF CHINA: NEW ZEALAND SECURITY POLICIES AND SOUTH-EAST ASIA 1949-75

CHAPTER 8

NEW ZEALAND, SOUTH-EAST ASIA AND SECURITY, 1949-57

Introduction

Before 1949, South-east Asia was not a region of great interest or importance to New Zealand's policy-makers. After 1949 it began to be, and by 1957 it was firmly established as a priority area of New Zealand's foreign policy. The key to the change is the advent of the People's Republic of China and the threat it was thought to pose to New Zealand through South-east Asia. The National government came to power in late 1949 with the belief that there was a pressing need to ensure that South-east Asia was protected against Communist take-over. The advent of a Communist government in China, it was thought, inevitably foreshadowed a Chinese drive to gain control - directly or indirectly - of an area that the Second World War had proved was of significance to New Zealand's security. The government wanted to involve the Western Great Powers with New Zealand and South-east Asia in a Pacific pact against Communism. Initially, neither Britain nor the United States was interested.

New Zealand's Commonwealth loyalty was such an influential factor in her policy-making during this period that the government was prepared to continue to involve the country in Britain's foreign policy priority area - the Middle East - despite its worries about the Asian situation. Indeed, when the United States offered New Zealand a reciprocal Pacific pact in 1951 as a *quid pro quo* for acquiescence in a "soft" Japanese Peace Treaty, New Zealand was reluctant to assume obligations that would conflict with her Middle

Eastern ones. When Britain and the United States showed signs of coming together in a South-east Asian pact in 1954, New Zealand was very enthusiastic for the scheme. Along with Australia, New Zealand believed that a military alliance involving the United States in South-east Asia was a necessity. However, New Zealand's Commonwealth ties were still such that it would not take on any obligations without British agreement, and would not join a South-east Asian alliance that did not include Britain. After the signing of the South-east Asia Collective Defence Treaty, New Zealand and Britain agreed that New Zealand's Commonwealth obligations should be transferred to Malaya. Beyond that, however, Britain pressed New Zealand for a ground troop contribution to a Commonwealth Strategic Reserve in Malaya.

New Zealand acquiesced as a Commonwealth duty, but also to prove to the United States that it was serious about its SEATO intentions, and thus to ensure that American support would be equally solid.

In 1957, New Zealand did not become a formal signatory to the defence agreement between Britain and independent Malaya, although it intended to keep its troops in Malaya. New Zealand preferred to remain informally obliged to a Great Power rather than become directly committed to a small South-east Asian state.

Some six months before the National Party took office in December, 1949, its spokesman on External Affairs, F.W. Doidge, was declaring in Parliament that New Zealand should be especially concerned with the political situation in South-east Asia. The Soviet

danger, which had lessened in Europe, was threatening the East, because Europe could be attacked through Asia.

> "The gravest danger spot in the world today is not Germany, not Western Europe, but south-east Asia".[1]

Doidge said that every one of the South-east Asian countries was disrupted by violent internal conflict, and in each there were forces bent on destroying the existing form of government. On top of this, the area was now directly threatened by the victorious Communist armies in China. New Zealand, he said, had to realise that its own fate was involved in South-east Asia's. Communism could sweep right through South-east Asia unless a dyke were built, and there were no countries more interested in the building of such a dyke than New Zealand and Australia. Poverty and destitution were driving the people of Asia to desperation: they were hungry for food and territorial expansion and were within easy reach of New Zealand's shores. Communist elements in Indonesia and Indo-China had to be combated, as well as those in Malaya, and Doidge thought that a Pacific Pact embracing the interested Western powers was the answer.

At the time, the New Zealand government's strategic concern was focussed on Europe and the Middle East, the regions where British interests were thought to be most vulnerable to the most likely enemy of the Commonwealth, the Soviet Union. New Zealand's leaders believed that the country's defence was bound up with the defence of wider Commonwealth interests, and in service of this belief, the Labour government had recently agreed that, in the event of global war, New

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[1] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 285, p102, 30 June, 1949

Zealand should send an augmented infantry division to aid British forces in the Middle East.[2]

New Zealand's military eyes were turned to South-east Asia only slightly, through the government's recent involvement, along with Australia, in British planning for the defence of Malaya and the South-west Pacific. This planning arrangement was known as ANZAM.[3]

A month after the National government took office in December 1949, Doidge, who had become Minister of External Affairs, was speaking out again for a Pact among the Pacific powers to halt the spread of Communism in Asia: a Pacific equivalent of the North Atlantic Treaty. The occasion was his journey to Colombo, Ceylon, for the first Commonwealth Foreign Ministers' Conference. The Minister said:

> "There must be a pact to stay the Red tide in the East. Communism is sweeping Asia unchecked".[4]

Doidge said that the conquest of Asia was the Leninist method of undermining the strength of the Western powers. He envisaged a union of South-east Asian countries with the colonial powers of the Pacific - France, the Netherlands and Britain - and Canada and the United States.

At the Colombo Conference, however, New Zealand found itself the only advocate of the Pact,[5] although Australia saw merit in the idea.

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[2] Cunninghame, R.R. "The Development of New Zealand's Foreign Policy and Political Alignments", p26 in Larkin, T.C. (ed.) *New Zealand's External Relations*.

[3] For the history of ANZAM, see Millar, T.B. "*Australia's Defence*" pp69-76

[4] *New Zealand Herald* (N.Z.H.) January 6, 1950, p6

[5] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 291, p2142, September 5, 1950

Britain and India were not interested. The conference brought forth, instead, a programme for fighting the causes of Communism by helping to develop the countries of Asia economically - the so-called Colombo Plan. The Plan was accepted in principle by New Zealand as a sound idea, but Doidge still believed that a military alliance was a necessity for the immediate future. In particular, the Minister of External Affairs was concerned with the progress of the Communist-led insurgency against the French colonial authorities in Indo-China.

Doidge reported back to Cabinet after Colombo that several of the Foreign Ministers had agreed with him that if the Communists were to gain power in Indo-China, the results for New Zealand would be "catastrophic".[6] Siam, Burma, Malaya and Indonesia would, almost of a certainty, fall in sequence, and bring the menace to the very doors of Australia and New Zealand.[7]

In February, 1950, when the French transferred their authority in Vietnam to a non-Communist nationalist government, the New Zealand government, along with Britain and Australia, immediately recognised it, in preference to the insurgent government, which was described by the Department of External Affairs as the "so-called Government of Ho Chi Minh".[8] Canada and India, on the other hand, refused to recognise the new Associated State of Vietnam on the grounds that it was not truly representative of the Vietnamese people. For them the principle of self-determination was paramount. The New Zealand government justified its action on the grounds that the previous recognition of the insurgent Vietminh government by the Soviet Union

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[6] Information supplied by the Research Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

[7] Ibid.

[8] *Annual Report of the Department of External Affairs 1950* (A.R.D.E.A.) p20

and China had given the Indo-China conflict a "wider significance".[9] The governing consideration in the New Zealand government's approach to the nationalist movements of South-east Asia was the relationship between those movements and the Soviet Union. Communist movements were *ipso facto* dominated by the Soviet Union and thus could not be truly nationalist.

In April, 1950 Doidge was looking forward to the May meeting of the Colombo Plan Consultative Committee in Canberra as another opportunity to raise the question of a Pacific pact.[10] In a speech at Tauranga that month, the Minister described the absence of such a pact when the Atlantic pact existed as

> "like shutting the front door and leaving the back door open. We have to do something and we cannot do it too quickly. If we don't the tidal wave of Communism will sweep down upon us".[11]

An opportunity for New Zealand to do something against Communist insurgents in South-east Asia existed in Malaya, where British colonial authorities had been administering a State of Emergency since 1948. New Zealand had been slightly involved since 1949, when the Labour government had acceded to a British request for a flight of Dakotas to help with supply dropping. In April, 1950, Opposition members of the British Parliament raised the question of approaches to New Zealand and Australia for ground troops for Malaya. Although Colonial Secretary Griffiths said that he hoped that Britain's military strength in Malaya would be sufficient, the question was taken up by the press in New Zealand. Asked to comment on the possibility of New Zealand forces for Malaya, Doidge avoided answering

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[9] Ibid.

[10] *O.D.T.* April 10, 1950, p7

[11] *O.D.T.* April 18, 1950, p5

directly. He said that the upcoming Canberra conference would continue Colombo deliberations about how to check the flood of Communism in Asia.[12] Prime Minister Holland was a little more positive when he was asked. He said that it could be taken for granted that New Zealand would play its part in ensuring the security of the Pacific.

> "We expect the lead to come from Britain and if Britain has anything to say to us concerning the part she might ask us to play, we will give the most careful consideration to any representations".[13]

After June, 1950, South-east Asia took somewhat less prominence in the outlook of the government as the Korean War broke out. The Korean War, however, was a powerful reinforcement to the view that the Soviet Union was concentrating its attention on Asia, and thus it ultimately increased the importance of South-east Asia. New Zealand responded quickly to the United Nations appeal for assistance for South-Korea.

Doidge told Parliament on July 12 that it was unthinkable that the Communist forces could be allowed to prevail in Korea.

> "If that happened ... the consequences could be disastrous throughout the Orient, and the still-free countries of Asia would be demoralised. The preservation of that new Republic of Korea is of tremendous importance to the rest of the world".[14]

In a review of foreign affairs two months later, Doidge said that it would be "dangerous complacency" to imagine that what was happening in Korea could not be repeated in Asia.

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[12] *O.D.T.* April 10, 1950, p7

[13] *O.D.T.* April 19, 1950, p5

[14] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 289, p341-342, 12 July, 1950

> "At present, Asia is in the position of the greatest danger, and the fate of our neighbours - and they are our neighbours - is a matter of the greatest and gravest concern to this country".[15]

The Minister went on to say that the countries in Asia most vulnerable to the Communists were those which had only recently achieved political independence. Six new governments had been created since the Second World War had ended, and New Zealand watched their progress with concern and anxiety. Doidge pledged that the National government, in concert with other members of the United Nations, would do all in its power to ensure the integrity of the threatened countries. Doidge reminded the House that in fighting for the threatened Asian countries, "we are at the same time fighting for ourselves".

Doidge drew members' attention in his speech specifically to Malaya and Indo-China. The terrorists in Malaya, he said, were entirely unsupported by the vast majority of the Malayan people, yet they were seeking to create conditions of anarchy and the opportunity to make the existing administration impossible.

> "Our government is pleased to learn that the anti-terrorist campaign is making steady, if not spectacular, progress, and we are all glad to know that the transport aircraft we have supplied are doing work of the utmost value in that area".[16]

On this occasion, Doidge spoke again of the Pacific Pact. He recalled that at the Colombo Conference he had emphasised that there could be no sense in building up a Pacific security organisation unless the United States were associated with it. A pact without the

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[15] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 291, p2138, 5 September, 1950

[16] Ibid., p2139

United States would have been a source of weakness, rather than one of strength, he said. In other words, American participation was to be the backbone of the pact. Doidge went on to say that his own view now, and that of the government, was that the pact was not as necessary as they had thought it six months previously.

> "It is unnecessary now because of what is happening in Korea. Today the United States of America is in the Pacific. I think she is there now as a permanent partner in the policing of the Pacific".[17]

The United States had given proof of its intention to resist Communist aggression in the Pacific, and that was what the pact was to have been all about.

However, four months later, on the eve of the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference in January, 1951, Prime Minister Holland told a Press Conference that New Zealand was still pressing for a Pacific pact, and wanted it to be as wide as possible.[18] Although New Zealand had announced that it thought the United States indispensable to a pact, the fact that the government raised the matter at a Commonwealth meeting suggests that it considered Britain's presence equally necessary. The presence of India and Canada had previously been mentioned as desirable.

Britain under a Labour government was not interested in joining the United States in policing the Asian-Pacific area against Communism, and neither was India.[19] British foreign policy concern was concentrated on Europe and the Middle East, and the British government wanted to keep New Zealand involved in that area, too.

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[17] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 291, p2142-2143, 5 September, 1950

[18] *O.D.T.* January 4, 1951, p5

[19] See Spender, P.C. "*Exercises in Diplomacy*", pp68-69, and p92

In 1949, the New Zealand Labour government had pledged to send Britain a division in the Middle East in the event of global war, and now at the 1951 Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference, the British government was seeking a reaffirmation of that pledge from the National government. Holland gave it,[20] but only after suggesting that it no longer seemed realistic for New Zealand to have defence commitments in the Middle East, when there were likely to be serious problems in a region closer to home.[21] The British insisted, however, that the time was not ripe for such a shift, and New Zealand was still prepared to fit in with British priorities.

However, when Prime Minister Holland visited the United States in February, 1951, he "laid emphasis on the need for security for New Zealand in the Pacific",[22] in his talks with President Truman. At this stage, the United States was anxious to conclude a peace treaty with Japan, and insisting that Japan be permitted under it to rearm. New Zealand was all the more eager for a Pacific pact if Japan were to be rearmed. Holland told the President that New Zealand could not make a contribution to the defence of the Middle East and at the same time defend her own shores.[23] At talks in Canberra on the Japanese Peace Treaty with Presidential emissary Dulles in February, 1951, Doidge supported the efforts of Australian Minister of External Affairs Spender to get an American guarantee of Australian and New Zealand security as compensation for a "soft" Japanese Peace Treaty.

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[20] *O.D.T.* January 11, 1951, p5 (N.Z.P.A. - London)

[21] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 305, p20, 24 March, 1955

[22] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 295, p195, 9 October, 1951

[23] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 295, p343, 16 October, 1951

However, Doidge was not keen on a formal treaty that had mutual obligations - a Pacific pact - without Britain's participation. Pacific obligations would clash with New Zealand's Middle East commitments,[24] and New Zealand's prior interest was in aiding the mother country in its global role. Both the Australians and the Americans wanted a formal treaty, with the United States insisting that the Australasian countries accept some obligations in return for a guarantee.[25] A compromise was arrived at with recognition of New Zealand's prior Commonwealth obligations being written into the preamble of the treaty.

In September, 1951, the Pacific Security Treaty between Australia, New Zealand and the United States was signed. It became known as the ANZUS Treaty. The treaty stated that each party recognised that an armed attack in the Pacific area on any of the parties to the treaty would be dangerous to its own peace and safety and declared that it would act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes.[26]

The ANZUS Treaty was not the Pacific pact that New Zealand had originally wanted. The government had hoped to unite Britain and the United States in the defence of South-east Asia, and thus New Zealand. ANZUS protected New Zealand itself, though not what the government regarded as the country's approaches. As ANZUS was signed, indications were given that the ideal of a wider pact was still there.

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[24] Spender, *Exercises in Diplomacy*, p104

[25] Ibid., p109

[26] Starke, J.G. *The ANZUS Treaty Alliance* p116

All three signatories emphasised that it was only one step towards building up security in the Pacific area.[27] As long as Commonwealth priorities remained in the Middle East, however, New Zealand would take on no Asian commitments. Indeed, in 1952, the government agreed to send an Air Force squadron to Cyprus to bolster Commonwealth forces in the Middle East.[28]

During 1952, New Zealand began to pay more attention to South-east Asia, as the Indo-China War intensified, and began to go badly for the French and their non-Communist protegé governments. The British anti-guerilla campaign in Malaya was reaching its height at this time, and the Korean War had entered a stalemate.

In the House of Representatives in July, Minister of Defence T.L. Macdonald said that there were two areas in the Far East of immediate interest to New Zealand, and these were Korea and Malaya. The defeat of the Communist guerillas in Malaya meant a very great deal to the British Commonwealth, and that included New Zealand, he said.[29] However, if Malaya and Korea were the immediate concerns of New Zealand, the situation in Indo-China was assuming greater importance. The outcome of the struggle there was of "the highest importance", to countries in the South-west Pacific, Macdonald said, because a Communist success would influence and affect a very large proportion of South-east Asia. Any movement in a westerly direction would carry on into Burma and Siam. "Efforts will be required to prevent that happening".[30]

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[27] Modelski, G. *Seato - Six Studies*, p54

[28] *Annual Report of the Department of External Affairs 1952*, p27

[29] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 297, p365, 16 July, 1952

[30] Ibid., p366

Shortly afterwards, New Zealand made a small effort to aid the anti-Communist forces in Indo-China. In September, 1952, the new Minister of External Affairs, T.C. Webb, announced that New Zealand was to give the French authorities in Indo-China a quantity of surplus arms and ammunition. Some 13,000 rifles, 600 machine guns, and nearly 750,000 rounds of ammunition were to be sent. The material was American lend-lease equipment. Webb said that the emergence of political stability in Vietnam was a matter of immediate concern to New Zealand, since if the country fell to the Communists, pressure on other South-east Asian countries would be increased. France, he said, had long been carrying a heavy burden in Indo-China and New Zealand was glad to be able to do something to help.[31]

By April, 1953, External Affairs Minister Webb was saying that Indo-China was a matter of more vital concern to New Zealand than Korea because of its strategic position.

> "A successful aggression in Indo-China would probably mean that South-east Asia would fall to the aggressors, and a very great danger to both Australia and New Zealand .. would become fairly imminent .. We are vitally concerned in what happens in that unfortunate country".[32]

The Minister went on to praise the French people for the burden they were shouldering in Indo-China "on behalf of many other countries, including New Zealand".

In August, 1953, the Chief of General Staff visited Indo-China to discuss with the French military authorities the possibility

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[31] *N.Z. Foreign Policy: Statements and Documents* p298, quoting *External Affairs Review*, October, 1952, pp3-4

[32] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 299, p354, 29 April, 1953

of New Zealand making available to them further items of surplus military equipment. A small French military mission subsequently visited New Zealand in November, 1953, to discuss the question in greater detail, and a shipment of arms and ammunition was despatched to Indo-China early in 1954.[33]

Nineteen fifty-three had seen the installation of a new Republican administration in the United States, and the American press had speculated early in the year that the new government was interested in a joint arrangement with a number of other powers for the defence of South-east Asia. Asked to comment on this speculation, Prime Minister Holland replied that New Zealand, along with Britain and Australia, was keenly interested in any practical measures which might serve to deter aggression in South-east Asia.[34] In February, Holland announced that New Zealand had been invited to join a proposed military agency to deal with defence problems in South-east Asia and was anxious to co-operate with other interested powers, but particularly the United Kingdom, in dealing with the defence problems of the area.[35]

At the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference of June, 1953, Holland once again raised the question of the transfer of New Zealand's wartime obligations from the Middle East to South-east Asia, and once again was stalled by the British military's view that the forces would be more valuable in the Middle East.[36] Holland's proposal came in the context of discussions between Britain, Australia and

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[33] *A.R.D.E.A.* 1954, p22

[34] *E.A.R.* January, 1953, p3

[35] *E.A.R.* February, 1953, p3

[36] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 305, p20, 24 March, 1955

New Zealand on South-east Asian defence.

By the end of the year, the situation of the anti-Communist forces in Indo-China was causing concern among the Western powers. Early in 1954, the Vietminh surrounded and laid siege to the important French fortress of Dienbienphu, which contained many of the best French troops in Indo-China. The French Chief of Staff flew to Washington to warn the Americans that only their direct intervention could stave off the final defeat of the anti-Communist forces in Indo-China.[37]

The American government was only prepared to intervene if its allies - particularly Britain - would also participate. Secretary of State Dulles, in the first move of a campaign to get those allies, issued a public call at the end of March for "united action" by the West to avert Communist control of South-east Asia.[38] As a first step towards possible intervention, Dulles wanted a collective security pact covering South-east Asia. The British government, however, was placing its hopes for a solution of the Indo-China problem on the Geneva Conference which was scheduled to begin on April 26. The Foreign Ministers of Britain, France, the Soviet Union and the United States had agreed in February to hold this conference to try and settle the Korean issue and to discuss the Indo-China situation. Communist China was scheduled to be a participant. Britain was cool to any proposition that might stop the conference reaching a solution.[39]

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[37] Modelski, *Seato - Six Studies*, p58

[38] Ibid.

[39] Lerche, C.O. "The United States, Great Britain and SEATO: A Case Study in the Fait Accompli", *Journal of Politics*, vol. 18, August, 1956, p461

Dulles therefore flew to London on April 11 to talk to British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden. At the end of their talks, a joint communique announced that Britain and the United States were ready to take part with other countries "in an examination of the possibility of establishing a collective defence ... to assure the peace, security and freedom of South-east Asia and the Western Pacific".[40]

The New Zealand government welcomed the announcement. In a statement issued on April 13, Webb said that the initiative of Britain and the United States would give heart to the French and Vietnamese forces who had "for so long borne the brunt of the struggle against Communist expansion in South East Asia".[41]

Britain, however, showed no inclination, despite its declaration, to proceed with any negotiations for a pact before the Conference at Geneva began, or while it continued to sit. American suggestions for immediate talks were rejected by Eden. Eden discussed his views with the Commonwealth External Affairs Ministers at Geneva on May 2, and recorded in his memoirs

"I was encouraged to find that we were all in agreement". Eden had told the Commonwealth Ministers:

> My view is that ... we must refuse, pending the outcome of negotiations here ... to allow ourselves to be drawn into the Indo-China War ... On the other hand, we can continue to assure the Americans .. that we are eager to work with them in building a collective defence .. to guarantee and support whatever settlement can be achieved in Indo-China and to assure the security of the rest of the area".[42]

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[40] Eden, Rt. Hon. Anthony, *Full Circle*, pp97-98

[41] *External Affairs Review*, April, 1954, p4

[42] Eden, Op Cit., pp113-114

The third meeting of the ANZUS Council was held on the afternoon of May 2, immediately after the New Zealand and Australian Ministers had talked with Eden. At this meeting, the United States evidently sounded out Australia and New Zealand on military intervention in Indo-China. R.G. Casey, the Australian Minister of External Affairs, recorded in his diary that Australia and the United States "were given to understand that New Zealand would not join in any military action without United Nations sanction".[43]

The ANZAC countries were, however, anxious to join the United States in beginning to take precautionary measures against a failure of the Geneva Conference to effect a settlement in Indo-China. Sir Alan Watt, then permanent head of Australia's External Affairs Department, later described Australia's position as being

> ".. somewhere between [that of] Britain and the United States, sharing the former's view that military intervention in Indo-China would be ineffective and would arouse strong resentment in Asia, but anxious to begin at the earliest possible moment the task of creating a defence organisation in South-east Asia which might in some degree 'shore up' the Geneva settlement, or act as a barrier to further Communist encroachments in the area or both".[44]

New Zealand's viewpoint was similar. The government supported the Australian suggestion, put forward at the ANZUS meeting, that there should be talks between the military staffs of the United States, Britain, France, Australia and New Zealand on the problems of defending South-east Asia.[45] Britain reluctantly agreed. On May 17, in the House of Commons, Churchill reiterated that Britain was determined to

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[43] Casey, R.G. *Australian Foreign Minister*, p147

[44] Watt, A. *The Evolution of Australian Foreign Policy* 1938-65, p153

[45] Watt, A. *Australian Diplomat*, p212, quoting Casey to Parliament August 10, 1954

see what came out of Geneva before committing herself to an alliance.[46] Only a few days later, however, Webb said that New Zealand was anxious to see a South-east Asian alliance formed.[47]

On May 26, the Minister of External Affairs enlarged on New Zealand's attitude. He said that the suggestion of a security system for South-east Asia was "of real importance to New Zealand". In 1940, he said, the Japanese had moved into Indo-China and used it as a base for their thrust southwards.

> "After the capture of the rest of South-east Asia, they started a drive in which ... they almost succeeded in their objective of seizing ... New Zealand and Australia. There is surely a lesson in this for us now. If the Communists were to bring under their control the non-Communist peoples of South-east Asia and Indonesia, the security of Australia and New Zealand would be gravely threatened".[48]

Webb went on to say that ANZUS had not been designed to deal with the problem before New Zealand. ANZUS, of course, operated only when the contracting parties themselves were attacked. New Zealand did not wish to wait until it was attacked before acting to stop the threat. Prime Minister Holland in early June said:

> "It is no use waiting until the danger reaches New Zealand's shores before doing something about it".[49]

In mid-month, Holland stated explicitly that New Zealand would fight for Malaya, if not for Indo-China. Holland said that only Siam and Burma [sic] lay between Indo-China and Malaya, and that "Malaya is a British country and we could not stand idly by and

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[46] *House of Commons Debates* vol. 527, Col. 1692, 17 May, 1954

[47] *New Zealand Herald* May 21, 1954, p9

[48] *E.A.R.*May 1954, p6

[49] *Auckland Star* June 3, 1954, p4

see Malaya go".[50]

The Australians were concerned that if a pact were not negotiated before the end of the Geneva Conference, it might never become reality at all. A quick settlement of the Indo-China issue might cause the American government to lose its current interest in participating in a defensive arrangement in South-east Asia.[51] For Australia, Indo-China itself was not as important as a South-east Asian alliance. New Zealand's sense of urgency about an alliance was probably based on the same concern.

New Zealand's first loyalty to the Commonwealth in defence matters, however, meant that the government would not consider the radical American suggestion of mid-May that a South-east Asian alliance be formed without Britain.

Eisenhower made the suggestion at a May 19 Press conference, saying that if Australia and New Zealand and some Asian states could be persuaded to join, Britain's adherence would not be indispensable.[52] The suggestion was more a tactic in a vigorous American drive to get Britain to agree to upgrade the forthcoming military staff talks into an alliance-forming political conference than a serious policy proposition, but New Zealand and Australia took it at face value and reacted accordingly. Both countries' representatives at Geneva were reported as thinking that the American idea was a "mistake".[53] The day after Eisenhower's Press conference, New Zealand informed

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[50] *O.D.T.* June 15, 1954

[51] Watt, *Evolution*, p153; Modelski, Op Cit., p60

[52] Lerche, Op. Cit., p468, quoting *New York Times*, May 21, 1954

[53] Ibid.

the United States of its unwillingness to participate in a pact that did not include Great Britain.[54] Eager though New Zealand was for the creation of a South-east Asian alliance, the government was not prepared to act without Britain in the area. An American-dominated alliance would increase the risk of New Zealand's being involved in Indo-China.

The military staff talks began in early June, as purely military talks. They were described in the *Annual Report of the Department of External Affairs* as "examining measures which could be taken concerning the proposed defensive alliance for the region".[55]

As the Geneva discussions on Indo-China reached an impasse during June, 1954, Britain became more interested in the formation of a South-east Asia pact. However, the interest was in a context that did not appeal to the United States or the ANZAC countries. On June 23 Eden made a major policy address in the House of Commons in which he called for a Collective Defence Organisation for South-east Asia along the lines of the North Atlantic Treaty. However, he made it clear that this defensive alliance was to be supplementary to a larger non-aggression pact embracing all the countries of the area - Communist and non-Communist alike. This was to be a Far Eastern version of the ill-fated Locarno Treaty of 1928. Eden emphasised the key role to be played by the non-aggression pact in the stabilisation of the region, and played down the immediate significance of the military alliance, saying: "It could be a future safeguard, but it is not a present panacea".[56]

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[54] Lerche, p469, quoting *New York Times*, May 21, 1954

[55] *A.R.D.E.A.* 1955, p24

[56] *House of Commons Debates* vol. 529, Column 433, 23 June, 1954

The Americans reacted with shock: the idea of non-aggression pacts with Communist nations was anathema to them. The New Zealand government, too, was suspicious of the idea.

In Parliament in July, the Minister of External Affairs reiterated New Zealand's concern for an early defence treaty and expressed distrust of Eden's proposed non-aggression pact.

> "One thing we do want to make clear; an Eastern Locarno Pact, if it were arranged, would not be a substitute for a South-East Asian alliance. I am not sure it would be compatible with it. We in New Zealand, and I know I can say the same for Australia, regard the formation of a South-East Asia alliance as a matter of extreme urgency".[57]

The Minister went on to say explicitly:

> ".. we regard the formation of a South-East Asia alliance as more urgent than our friends in the United Kingdom do".

On June 26 Churchill and Eden had flown to the United States to try and harmonise policy with the United States government. At the talks, Britain had finally agreed not to wait for the end of the Geneva Conference before beginning planning for a Collective Defence Treaty. At the end of the British visit, a further ANZUS Council meeting had been held, and it had both expressed satisfaction with the British change of mind and stressed the urgency of getting an alliance together.

> "The Australian and New Zealand representatives expressed satisfaction with the statement by President Eisenhower and Sir Winston Churchill that plans for Collective Defence in South-east Asia be pressed forward ... All three representatives at the ANZUS meeting agreed on the need for immediate action to bring about the early establishment of collective defence in South-east Asia".[58]

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[57] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 303, p211, 6 July, 1954

[58] *Department of State Bulletin* July 12, 1954, p50

Webb said in Parliament in early July that the Churchill-Eisenhower agreement to press forward with plans for the collective defence system was very reassuring for New Zealand. He said he knew that New Zealand, supporting her "big sister across the Tasman" would be able to exert an influence in efforts to bring about a South-east Asian alliance, and he was convinced that New Zealand would be able to play

> "quite a part in reconciling any differences that might arise between these two great nations on whom our security so rightly depends".[59]

It seemed, then, that Webb felt confident that New Zealand and Australia, working together, could push Britain in the right direction - towards the United States.

The New Zealand government, perhaps because of its perceived geographical closeness to the area in question, was much more pessimistic than Britain of the chances of achieving stability in the region through diplomatic means.

> "Whatever comes out of Geneva, whether a settlement is arranged or not, there is no doubt that the menace of Communism will be greater for us and for Australia than it is today, not to mention those countries nearer, such as Indo-China",

Webb told the House.[60]

Defence Minister Macdonald was convinced that even if Vietnam were to be partitioned and the southern portion left to the non-Communist Associated State of Vietnam, this would be but a temporary solution. The Communists would soon renew the assault, and if frustrated in Vietnam would divert their energies to Thailand instead.

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[59] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 303, p212, 6 July, 1954

[60] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 303, p211, 6 July, 1954

Unrest in Thailand would invariably upset the favourable situation in Malaya. A Collective Security arrangement to deter further assaults was necessary.[61]

In early July, an Anglo-American working party got down to drafting a Collective Defence Treaty, and its first report was released on July 20.[62] A fundamental difference between the two major participants was revealed: Britain wanted the widest possible Asian membership of the pact, with the particular inclusion of India, whereas the Americans were prepared to settle for just the 'aligned' Asian states. New Zealand went along with Britain only to the extent that she thought the membership of the South Asian states was desirable. As with the United States and Australia, the government did not believe that the Colombo Powers' presence was essential. As Webb told the House on July 8: "I would not go to the length of saying that their inclusion in any alliance is an indispensable condition".[63] The existence of the Pact was more important than its wide membership, and the Pact's existence was important because it bound the United States to the defence of South-east Asia.

On July 21, the Indo-China issue was resolved by an agreement at Geneva which, in effect, temporarily partitioned Vietnam. New Zealand, unlike the United States, was willing to formally accept this practical solution to the problem. At the end of the month Webb told Parliament, "I think we can regard the settlement that has been arranged as a very reasonable one".[64] The government,

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[61] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 303, pp272-74, 7 July, 1954

[62] Lerche, p473

[63] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 303, p301, July 8, 1954

[64] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 303, p838, 30 July, 1954

however, had its doubts that the settlement would last. The Vietminh, it was believed, would soon try to take over the southern zone either militarily or politically. This was not thought to be in New Zealand's interests and accounted for the public statement issued by the Prime Minister immediately after the settlement. Holland said that the maintenance of the territorial and political integrity of the Associated States of Indo-China was essential for the consolidation of peace in South-east Asia.

> "For this reason, the New Zealand government ... would regard a violation of the Indo-China settlement as a threat to the security of the South-east Asian area, and a danger to international peace and security generally".[65]

The fear that the settlement would be violated made New Zealand and Australia anxious to create defence machinery to deter such an occurrence. Webb said that the end of the fighting did not mean that the need to press on with Collective defence measures was now less urgent.

> "Unfortunately, I do not think that we can deny that the settlement in Indo-China has increased the prospects of Communism advancing still further ..".[66]

Presumably he was thinking of the fact that the Communists had been "given" a territorial plum and would thus be encouraged to try again.

Dean Eyre reiterated this line of thought in the House on August 5, when he said that the armistice in South-east Asia was a "political Dunkirk", despite its being a diplomatic victory, and the Annual Report of the Department of External Affairs for 1955 stated that the favourable position secured by the Vietminh had

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[65] *E.A.R.* July, 1954, pp27-28

[66] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 303, p838, 30 July, 1954

increased the long-term threat from the North to the smaller countries of South-east Asia.[67]

Webb said on July 30 that New Zealand hoped for an arrangement like the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, which would be designed to deter the Communists. On August 10, Macdonald, too, spoke of a South-east Asia Treaty Organisation "on the lines of NATO", and said that New Zealand's future might depend on its success.[68] Macdonald also reminded the House that Britain had achieved a diplomatic success at Geneva only because it was backed by American military power.[69] The implication was that this military power was the only real guarantee of security for New Zealand in South-east Asia.

During August, the final form of the South-east Asia Collective Defence Treaty was hammered out. The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation arrangement that Australia and New Zealand favoured would have involved specific commitments of troops to a standing army, and Australia at least was prepared to pledge these. A Press Association report claimed that Australia was more definite in its views about this than New Zealand.

> "Mr Menzies is prepared to make firm commitments of manpower and materials towards a standing defence force to be stationed permanently in South-east Asia".[70]

Macdonald had told Parliament that participation by New Zealand in the new organisation might involve the country in some additional commitments for defence, but he did not indicate that New Zealand was pressing for troop commitments.

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[67] *A.R.D.E.A.* 1955, p5; Eyre N.Z.P.D. vol. 303, pp980-82, 5 August, 1954

[68] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 303, p1047, 10 August, 1954

[69] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 303, p1049, 10 August, 1954

[70] *Waikato Times* (N.Z.P.A.) September 1, 1954, p10

Britain had accepted the fact that India would not join any sort of defensive alliance, and the final signatories included only three Asian states - Pakistan, Thailand and the Philippines. The treaty was signed in Manila on September 8, 1954. In reporting on it to Parliament at the end of the month, Webb revealed that it had satisfied a long-standing government concern.

> "We regard this treaty as a useful means of associating the United Kingdom and the United States in the defence of this area".[71]

Once having signed the South-east Asian Collective Defence Treaty, New Zealand found itself formally pledged to the defence of countries in South-east Asia, while still having forces in the Middle East, and being pledged to send troops there in the event of a general war. Article Four of the treaty declared that each party recognised that aggression by means of armed attack in the treaty area against any of the parties, or any state that the parties might designate, "would endanger its own peace and safety", and that it would, in that event, "act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes".[72] Accordingly, the government believed that New Zealand's Commonwealth military obligations should be changed to apply to the South-east Asian area.

In his 1955 New Year message to the nation, Prime Minister Holland said:

> "New Zealand cannot be blind to the shift in emphasis in international dangers from Europe and the Middle East to the Pacific, much nearer to us geographically. The Korean and Indo-China wars gave New Zealand a much greater awareness of the threats that menace us in the modern world".[73]

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71 *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 304, p2103, 30 September, 1954

72 *N.Z. Foreign Policy: Statements and Documents* No.96, p364

73 *O.D.T.* December 31, 1954, p1

In a broadcast to the nation on January 18, 1955, prior to leaving for the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference in London, Holland declared that New Zealand was well aware that the change in emphasis would mean increased responsibilities for New Zealand.

> "From time to time ... I have strongly questioned the wisdom of dividing our forces by having some in the Middle East and some in the Pacific".[74]

The Pacific forces referred to were those in Korea. The Prime Minister went on to say that whatever New Zealand's defence effort, it must have strong friends, willing and able to help it. New Zealand must do what it could in the common defence effort. Holland was sure that New Zealanders were willing to accept any larger responsibilities which the discharge of New Zealand's duties might entail.

> "The wrecks of many countries are a stern warning of what happens to nations that are careless or indifferent or both".

The Prime Minister said that he was leaving for the London conference "quite clear in my mind as to what we should do".

Although Holland was seeking a transfer of New Zealand's Commonwealth military obligations for a general war to South-east Asia, and also the return of the air force unit from the Middle East, the British government had requests of its own. A report in the *Otago Daily Times* said that it was believed that Britain would press strongly for both New Zealand and Australia to supply ground troops for a proposed Commonwealth Strategic Reserve to be stationed in Malaya.[75]

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[74] *O.D.T.* January 19, 1955, p1

[75] *O.D.T.* January 9, 1955, p4

The report noted that it was no simple matter for Holland to agree to any British proposal to provide ground troops. New Zealand already maintained more than a thousand volunteers in Korea, and might find difficulty in raising them for Malaya.

At the beginning of February, another report claimed that "insistent pressure" has been exerted on Holland by the British government since his arrival in London for New Zealand to provide troops for the area. The possibility of the provision of at least one infantry battalion had been discussed.[76]

All the New Zealand Prime Minister agreed to immediately was the transfer of New Zealand's air units from the Middle East to Malaya. It was announced while the conference was still proceeding that New Zealand's fighter-bomber squadron, and half a transport squadron, would move from Cyprus to Malaya. Holland, announcing the transfer, said:

> "It has become increasingly clear that the security of South-east Asia, and, as part of it, the security of Malaya, are of special significance to New Zealand, and further, that the United Kingdom has been bearing a disproportionate share of the defence burden there, and indeed, all over the globe".[77]

The Prime Minister continued:

> "I am sure that New Zealand would wish in her own interests, and in the interests of the Commonwealth and of the free peoples of South-east Asia, to contribute towards the maintenance of security in the area".

Holland returned to New Zealand by way of Malaya, and at Ipoh he took the opportunity of reiterating that New Zealand regarded Malaya as "a very strategic point in the security of the Pacific area".[78]

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[76] *O.D.T.* February 14, 1955, p4; see also *Review of Defence Policy 1957*, p9

[77] *O.D.T.* February 8, 1955, p5

[78] *O.D.T.* March 1, 1955, p3

The Prime Minister announced that the government was to recommend to Parliament the sending of a ground force to Malaya. External Affairs Minister Macdonald said that this would be a step towards implementation of the ANZAM understanding between Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom. The government, however, was not very enthusiastic about the decision. A press report indicated that the government believed that the sending of troops overseas in peace-time would be a delicate issue in New Zealand, and that the Labour Opposition would oppose the move. The possibility of sending national servicemen to Malaya would have to be examined.[79] Later, Macdonald was to write that it was a

> "new and by no means pleasant thing for New Zealand to send forces abroad in peacetime ... We have always disliked the idea of a standing army in time of peace, but the days are passing when countries can have a free ride in terms of security; Britain now has heavy, almost insupportable burdens, and we believe that we must help to carry them".[80]

A substantial army unit was evidently a different proposition in political terms from the air force units hitherto stationed abroad. This was especially so if the unit was not drawn from existing professional forces.

On reaching New Zealand, the Prime Minister said of the London conference that it had resulted in a complete revision of New Zealand's military obligations, a revision that had been undertaken as a complement to the reassessment of Commonwealth strategy.[81] New Zealand would no longer be bound to commit a division to the

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[79] *O.D.T.* March 2, 1955, p2

[80] *E.A.R.* July, 1955, p53

[81] *O.D.T.* February 25, 1955, p4

Middle East in the event of global war; it would go instead to Malaya. As to the plan for the establishment of a strategic reserve, Holland said he had been heartened by the United Kingdom's continuing build-up of forces in South-east Asia, and that he believed Commonwealth participation would be a valuable insurance of American support in the future.

> "The Commonwealth countries themselves will, I feel, also gain much by pushing on with constructive plans which will do more than anything else to demonstrate to our American allies our determination to help ourselves against the menace of Communist expansion in the South-west Pacific".[82]

New Zealand, then, was not concerned solely with British wishes. The willingness to station troops in South-east Asia was also an attempt to engage American support - to ensure that the South-east Asia Collective Defence Treaty would be made effective by American public opinion.

In late March, Prime Minister Holland put the question of stationing New Zealand troops in Malaya to the House of Representatives.

Holland justified the stationing of forces abroad in peace-time first in terms of aiding Britain in her global role - New Zealand's traditional function. The time was past, he said, when New Zealand could operate as though it were an observer of the world situation, ready to come to Britain's aid only after war had broken out, and in the meantime leaving to Britain the burden of maintaining the peace.

> "Today ... Britain is hard-pressed. She has her forces spread around the world, and I believe we must lend a hand and play our part ... I believe every honourable Member would support me when I say that New Zealand is willing and anxious to play her part and to relieve the disproportionate share of the burden that Britain is bearing".[83]

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[82] *E.A.R.* March, 1955, p2

[83] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 305, p21, 24 March, 1955

Holland made it clear that the government's decision had been made in response to a specific request from the United Kingdom.

> "Britain has spoken to us ... and she has given us a plan that I believe is within our reach and capacity".[84]

New Zealand was anxious to respond for two reasons. First, there was a necessity to "earn the support and help of other people" in order to ensure the security of the country, and secondly, New Zealand's own defence was involved in that of Malaya. If New Zealand did not do its bit when and where it was wanted it could not complain if its allies did not make allowances for its interests in their planning.

> "We must earn the support of Britain by pulling our weight in the British boat".[85]

The same argument applied with reference to the United States, since the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve was to be part of the South-east Asia Treaty Organisation's standing forces. Although Holland did not mention the SEATO connection, he said:

> "Also we must earn the active support of the United States by demonstrating to her that we are prepared to play our part in our own defence".[86]

Holland noted that the troubled areas of the world seemed to form a series of steps in the direction of New Zealand, and

> "about the last place we can make a stand without coming into our own territory is Malaya".[87]

So, the Prime Minister went on, New Zealand was going to help Britain form a 'Cold War front' in Malaya, to ensure that any enemy was "going to be stopped before he gets here".

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[84] Ibid.

[85] Ibid.

[86] Ibid.

[87] *N.Z.P.D.* vol.305, p21, 24 March, 1955

The Minister of External Affairs put the matter succinctly:

> "In strengthening Britain's effort, New Zealand will at the same time be strengthening her own position".[88]

New Zealand had not done more for Malaya before because the country had done so much in Korea, the Prime Minister said on March 31. "We have had a large force there and it has cost us a great deal of money".[89]

Government ministers made no mention of the fact that the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve was in part designed as a striking force for the South-east Asia Treaty Organisation, and that New Zealand troops would be on stand-by to resist aggression outside Malaya. The commitment was presented only as an aid to Britain in suppressing the guerillas in Malaya. T.L. Macdonald, for instance, said:

> "Malaya is important to the Commonwealth, and successful Communist advances there would make it difficult to resist Communist advances in other parts of South-East Asia. Over the years Britain has carried a heavy load in connection with the destructive work of Communist terrorists, and New Zealand ... will be doing the right thing in giving Britain a helping hand".[90]

Only E.H. Halstead, the Minister for Social Security, linked the Reserve to SEATO. On 31 March he said:

> "Malaya is the cornerstone of any defence system inSouth-east Asia".

He went on to say that it was also a Commonwealth commitment, giving the wider strategic purpose front ranking. Elaborating on that

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[88] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 305, p56, 29 March, 1955

[89] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 305, p153, 31 March, 1955

[90] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 305, p56, 29 March, 1955

strategic purpose, he said: "If Malaya went, there would be little hope of holding anything until we got to the shores of Australia".[91]

Australia's Prime Minister Menzies, when he announced his country's commitment to Malaya on April 1, seemed to stress Holland's February 8 point of the necessity of demonstrating to the Americans that the ANZAC countries were serious about the defence of South-east Asia and worthy of support. Australia's troops he said, would be "some proof of the seriousness with which we take the Communist threat".[92] Menzies also said that the commitment would serve as "some guarantee to the people of Malaya that their present orderly progress towards democratic self-government, a progress which enjoys the deeply sympathetic interest of Australia, will not be interfered with by dictatorial Communist aggression".

A mention of helping the Malayan peoples towards self-government had been absent from the New Zealand Prime Minister's arguments for the decision.

On April 4, New Zealand's Cabinet approved the proposed New Zealand role in Malaya. Prime Minister Holland seemed eager to re-assure the country that this was not a risky move in a new direction, but one strictly in accord with New Zealand's foreign policy tradition as spear-carrier for Britain. As Jackson remarks, Malaya itself seemed almost irrelevant.[93]

> "I cannot emphasise too often that this is a Commonwealth undertaking, to which members of the Commonwealth are contributing under an agreed plan".[94]

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[91] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 305, p108, 30 March, 1955

[92] *O.D.T.* April 2, 1955, p2 (N.Z.P.A. - Canberra)

[93] Jackson, W.K. "Because its there", *Jnl of Sth-east Asian Studies* March, 1971, p23

[94] *W.T.* April 4, 1955, p6

New Zealand was not doing anything by itself, but fitting in to a British-initiated scheme. Explaining the change in New Zealand's commitment to the Dominion Council of the Returned Servicemen's Association in June, the Prime Minister still hammered the Commonwealth theme.

> "We must address ourselves to the security of the Commonwealth countries, that they are strong and ready",

he said.

After mentioning the "teeming millions right at New Zealand's front door", Holland declared that New Zealand's security depended to a large extent on its ability to make friends.

> "We have always been with Great Britain and we will always stand with her".[95]

The Prime Minister's statement was another indication that in defence matters, New Zealand's foremost concern was still to co-operate with Great Britain.

New Zealand's ground force contribution to the Reserve was very small - a company of commandoes. The United Kingdom had originally asked for a battalion of infantry, but the government had been unable to supply it.[96] The British kept the pressure on, however, for in 1956 Holland revealed that the government had been asked by the United Kingdom if New Zealand would substantially increase its contribution. The Prime Minster expressed doubt: "We can do what is satisfactory, although we cannot perhaps, go as far as the United Kingdom would like us to go".[97] It did

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[95] *O.D.T.* June 15, 1955, p10

[96] *Review of Defence Policy 1957* p9, A.J.H.R. 1957 A-14

[97] *O.D.T.* August, 8, 1956, p5

seem as if the government had been more concerned to make a token gesture to British calls than to really get involved in South-east Asian defence.

Commenting on the British request to New Zealand, the newly-elected Chief Minister of Malaya, Tunku Abdul Rahman, revealed that Britain wanted more New Zealand troops in Malaya so that she could withdraw some of her own. Any increase in New Zealand's forces in the Federation would be counter-balanced by a corresponding reduction of British troops. The Chief Minister said that the Malayan government wanted the current troop numbers maintained.

> "We need the present armed strength to keep Communist terrorism under control and to bring the Emergency to an end. If any of the United Kingdom troops are to be withdrawn, we would welcome New Zealand troops to make up the number and strength of the forces at present engaged. I would not risk relaxing any efforts against the Communist terrorists at this present juncture".[98]

The Tunku said that the recent conference of Commonwealth Prime Ministers had discussed the possibility of New Zealand's making a "slightly increased" contribution to the Commonwealth forces in Malaya.

New Zealand's fealty to Britain was still very strong, as was demonstrated in November by the Suez Canal crisis. Although an issue in which New Zealand had no direct interest, aside from the preservation of a route of communication with Britain, New Zealand lined up with Britain and Australia in the United Nations to defend the British invasion of Egypt against most of the rest of the world, including the United States. On November 2, 1956, the General Assembly resolution asking all nations to refrain from intervention

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[98] *O.D.T.* August 13, 1956, p1

by force was passed by 64 votes to 5, New Zealand being one of the five. The Commonwealth, it had been demonstrated, came before United Nations principles. In August, 1956, when the crisis had first broken, Holland had assured Eden that New Zealand approved of Britain's military preparations and that it would stand by the Mother Country through thick and thin. Holland informed the House of Representatives that because the Suez Canal was vital to Britain, and Britain was vital to New Zealand, New Zealand was prepared to support British policy - if necessary with force, he hinted.[99]

However, there was no immediate action by New Zealand on the British request for more forces in Malaya. Britain's Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, Lord Home, visited New Zealand early in 1957, and said in Auckland that Britain would appreciate more New Zealand aid in the battle with the Malayan Communists.

> "The more men you can send to Malaya the better. We, of course, would like to see you with more there, but that is up to you".[100]

In April, the British government published a White Paper on Defence that announced a 45 percent reduction in the Army's manpower over the next five years, and substantial cuts in the garrisons overseas, including Malaya. In the future, reliance would be placed on mobile reinforcements in Britain, able to be flown to overseas bases in an emergency.[101] In New Zealand and Australia, this caused considerable uneasiness, although it does not seem to have been expressed publicly in New Zealand.[102] The British White

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[99] Kennaway, R.N. *New Zealand Foreign Policy* p48

[100] *O.D.T.* March 23, 1957, p1

[101] Bartlett, C.J. *The Long Retreat* pp128-142

[102] MacGibbon, I.C. "The Defence of New Zealand 1945-1957" p174 in New Zealand Institute of International Affairs, *New Zealand in World Affairs*, vol. 1.

Paper was quickly followed by a New Zealand White Paper on Defence, wh ch announced a change in army organisation to provide a standing force and quickly-available mobile reinforcement.[103] The standing force would be an infantry battalion which would be made available for immediate service in Malaya to replace a British battalion.[104]

In the following debate in Parliament, T.P. Shand, the Post-master General, declared that this move was to prove again to Britain and the United States that New Zealand really was concerned with the defence of South-east Asia and was prepared to help them with it, rather than just sheltering behing her Great Power guarantees.

> "This will provide for the first time clear evidence to our allies that we are going to be there with them at the beginning; that, if there is Communist aggression in the area, our troops will be involved from the outset".[105]

Later, on July 23, Shand made the point again.

> "We were making a lot of promises, and we became parties to various treaties, but it has not been clear that we were prepared to make a practical contribution. Now, set out in the White Paper is a practical contribution ... which, I believe, will meet our obligations".[106]

The battalion, then was a demonstration that SEATO meant something to New Zealand.

When one of the Labour members of Parliament, W.W. Freer, criticised the increasing emphasis on the military approach in Malaya, the Minister of Defence insisted that the Malayan government should have help in its efforts to maintain internal security.

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[103] *Review of Defence Policy 1957*, A.J.H.R. 1957 A-14, esp. p7.

[104] Ibid., p9

[105] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 311, p32, 12 June, 1957

[106] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 312, p1086, 23 July, 1956

> ".. the member for Mount Albert would leave it to the Malayan government to use its own troops without stiffening by troops from New Zealand, Australia or Great Britain. He would throw the responsibility on the Malayan government".[107]

Macdonald did not seem to think it unusual that the Malayan government should not take responsibility for its own internal order. The over-riding factor was that New Zealand national interest required that Malaya remain non-Communist.

> "He [Freer] knows quite well that the defence of New Zealand and Australia may also have to be undertaken in that area. Does he not want us to have any responsibility for security in that area? He knows that unless friendly forces are provided a tremendous advantage would be given to the Communists".

The appreciation that New Zealand had a regional role to play in South-east Asia beyond her Commonwealth obligations was expressed by D.M. Rae in July. Rae's appreciation extended to the recognition that Britain would not always be in the area in strength.

> "Without any weakening of Commonwealth loyalty we are beginning to understand that we have a role to play ourselves in an area that affects us very closely indeed ..... It has been said very properly that no nation can contract out of its geographical region, and there is no doubt that our geographical region is South-East Asia. With the gradual withdrawal of Britain from her positions in South-east Asia, it seems there will be a vacuum there unless Australia and New Zealand particularly undertake very much heavier commitments than in the past".[108]

Malaya was due to become independent in August, 1957, and Britain agreed to continue to aid the Federation in its external defence after independence. This involved continuing to station military forces in Malaya. The legal basis for this was to be the Anglo-Malayan Defence Agreement.

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[107] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 311, p84, 13 June, 1957

[108] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 312, p1091, 23 July, 1957

New Zealand, although willing to continue to keep its forces in Malaya as part of the Strategic Reserve, did not become a signatory to the Defence Agreement when it was signed in October, 1957. Rather New Zealand decided to associate itself with the provisions. In this way, New Zealand did not become legally obliged to the government of Malaya, but remained informally obliged to Britain. Britain would continue to take all the formal responsibility for the defence of independent Malaya. New Zealand apparently was not prepared to become a partner of Britain in the defence of Malaya. The government preferred to duck this responsibility - evidence of true commitment to South-east Asia in its own right, one might think - and remain as a background supporter of Britain. Partnership would not come until 1971. The decision to associate itself with A.M.D.A. epitomised the fact that New Zealand saw its interest as being in helping Britain to stay in South-east Asia, as reinforcing British strength. Remove the British presence and New Zealand was free of Malaya. Joining the Agreement might have been the thin end of the wedge as far as taking over British obligations in South-east Asia was concerned. As a partner, New Zealand, along with Australia, might have been expected to make more nearly equal contributions to the defence of the area.

Caird quotes External Affairs sources to the effect that "associate" status was in keeping with New Zealand's post-Second World War policy of undertaking binding defence obligations only in conjunction with a multi-lateral guarantee.[109] In other words,

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[109] Caird, R.J. "New Zealand's Foreign Policy and Malaya/Malaysia 1955-65", Unpub. M.A. Thesis, University of Canterbury, 1970, p75

New Zealand was only interested in reciprocal defence agreements and with more than one power. A bi-lateral guarantee to Malaya, even if in conjunction with Britain and Australia, would be going out on a limb. It is possible that policy-planners remembered that Britain had been singularly ineffective in defending Malaya from the Japanese in World War Two.

Caird further says that New Zealand's policy with regard to formal obligations to Malaya was identical to Australia's. Australia's Prime Minister Menzies regarded any binding defence commitments in South-east Asia without a United States guarantee as most imprudent.[110]

When the National government - led by K.J. Holyoake since Holland's retirement in September, 1957 - lost the November, 1957 election and went out of office, New Zealand was not linked in any way with the Defence Agreement. A letter of association with the agreement was not to be sent by the succeeding Labour government until March, 1959.

Conclusion

South-east Asia first became of interest to New Zealand's policy-makers after the Communist assumption of power in China in 1949. It was believed that China would be a hostile and expansionist power, and that it would pose a threat to New Zealand's security if it were able to gain control of the weak and unstable south-east Asian states that formed a chain down to the border of Australia. New Zealand's first objective in South-east Asia was thus to strengthen the position of the non-Communist governments there.

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[110] Ibid.

The National government's first policy to this end was an attempt to form a Pacific Security Pact which would link the United States and the European states with interests in the region in the defence of South-east Asia. The Pact was to be like the North Atlantic Treaty: a deterrent to Communist advance. However, neither the United States nor the British Labour government was interested in such a pact in 1950. Britain's greater concern was for the Middle East, and the British government wanted New Zealand help there rather than in the Pacific. New Zealand's support for Britain's global defence role led her to agree to provide troops for the Middle East in the event of global war despite her concern for her security in the Pacific.

New Zealand showed its continuing concern with the deteriorating situation of the non-Communist forces in Indo-China with shipments in 1952 and 1953 of surplus arms and ammunition to the French Union forces there. It was accepted that Communist insurgencies in the region were sustained and controlled by China and the Soviet Union for those powers' ends, and it was not believed that the insurgencies were in any way spontaneous responses to local conditions.

When the United States proposed a Collective Defence System for South-east Asia in early 1954, New Zealand was naturally very welcoming of it, especially since Britain had shown an interest. New Zealand and Australia supported the United States against Britain in its eagerness to have the Security system set up immediately, but at the same time they supported Britain against the United States in its unwillingness to use the proposed alliance for immediate military intervention in the Indo-China War. New Zealand wanted the security system to deter the Communist forces from advancing further, and to commit the United States to the defence of South-east Asia. Again, however, New

Zealand's support for Britain's global defence role made it unwilling to enter a South-east Asian alliance that Britain was not party to. When the South-east Asian Collective Defence Treaty was negotiated after an Indo-China settlement, New Zealand saw its major virtue in the uniting of Britain and the United States in the defence of the area. Thus, in the period 1950 to 1954, Britain was a constraint on New Zealand's South-east Asian policy. New Zealand followed Commonwealth priorities rather than its own.

New Zealand's first major military involvement in South-east Asia - the contribution of troops to the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve in Malaya - came in 1955 as the result of British urging, and it was justified by the New Zealand government in terms of aiding Britain in its global role. The contribution however, served two other objectives as well: the cementing of the American commitment to South-east Asia and New Zealand, and the defence of non-Communist governments in the region.

The increase in New Zealand's troop contribution to the Reserve in 1957 was likewise the result of British pressure.

When Britain signed a defence agreement with Malaya in October, 1957, New Zealand did not become a signatory to it, but associated herself with it by letter. In this way, the government did not become obliged to Malaya, but remained informally obliged to Britain. New Zealand's commitment was to the Great Powers, and not to South-east Asia. New Zealand would stay involved with Malaya as long as Britain was involved.

CHAPTER 9

THE LABOUR PARTY AND SOUTH-EAST ASIA, 1950-1960: ATTITUDES AND POLICIES TOWARDS INDO-CHINA AND MALAYA

Introduction

The Labour Party entered the nineteen-fifties committed to the strengthening of the British Commonwealth and the upholding of the principles of the United Nations, including resistance to aggression and independence for dependent peoples. These objectives formed the context of the party's policy-making as it was forced to turn its attention to South-east Asia. In office before 1950, it had upheld the right of the Indonesians to self-determination from the Dutch, but had refused to grant recognition to the Communist-led Vietminh in Indo-China, preferring the non-Communist administration of Bao Dai. This ambivalence with regard to nationalist movements meant that Labour Party policy in the 1950s towards South-east Asia did not differ significantly from National's. Labour parliamentarians were prepared to concede publicly by 1953 that the Communist-led Vietminh were more representative of the will of the Vietnamese people than the government headed by Bao Dai, and hence to oppose any suggestion of military involvement on the latter's behalf. At the same time, however, they shared the strategic assumptions of their National Party opponents - that Communist regimes in South-east Asia were threats to New Zealand's security because they represented extensions of the power of China and could be instruments for the further extension of that power. The Labour Party's support of the South-east Asia Collective Defence Treaty was based partly on a

fear of Chinese aggression in the area, and partly on a desire to see Britain and the United States associated in Pacific defence. Reflecting its perception of the support for Communist insurgency in Vietnam, the Labour government that came to power in 1957 showed by its reaction to the Laotian crisis of 1959 that it did not regard SEATO as an instrument to suppress internal rebellion, Communist or not. Prime Minister Nash wanted proof of overt aggression from the outside, plus a United Nations resolution, before taking any action.

In 1955 the party was prepared to acquiesce in New Zealand troops aiding Britain against insurgents in Malaya, and later it was prepared to permit them to aid the Malayan government to crush Communist insurgents. In the former case, a strong fealty to Britain combined happily with an appreciation that the insurgents did not have the wide support of the people of Malaya, and that their elimination would speed the progress of self-rule. Once self-rule had come, the continuing use of New Zealand troops on internal security duties was justified in terms of preserving the democratic system from attack from within. The Commonwealth Strategic Reserve's continuing existence was supported on the same grounds that the National government supported it - that New Zealand had an interest in preserving non-Communist governments in Asia from external attack. The bipartisan interest in Malaya as a base for British power was not mentioned, although Nash had considered it in 1955.

The coming of the Korean War in 1950 showed that the Labour Party's commitment to resisting aggression in a collective context was still very strong. Some Labour members at times seemed more enthusiastic for New Zealand's participation in the war than were members of the government. F. Hackett, for instance, criticised the government in the House on July 11, 1950 for an inadequate response to the United Nation's call for assistance.

> "It is not enough for the Minister of Defence to say we have sent two ships. We do not know when we will be sending contingents of troops. Why would we do that? We would do it because we must redeem our pledge, and are willing to redeem our pledge of security for those smaller nations against wanton aggression".[1]

Two days later Labour's former Minister of Defence, F. Jones, was calling for New Zealand to do all it possibly could to build up the defence forces "to assist the British Commonwealth Forces and also the Forces of the United Nations".[2] When T.C. Webb, the Minister of Justice, asked in evident surprise if the Labour member was suggesting that New Zealand send ground troops to Korea, Jones said that it was something that might have to be faced up to in the future.

The Labour Party's continuing fierce devotion to the Commonwealth connection was shown up in its attitude to the Pacific Security Treaty concluded in September, 1951. While sharing the National Party's desire for a Pacific Pact, the Labour Party objected to the form that it had emerged in. The ANZUS Treaty seemed to it to move New Zealand away from the traditional connection with the United Kingdom towards the United States.

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[1] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 289, p303, 11 July, 1950

[2] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 289, p370, 13 July, 1950

When the treaty was being discussed in Parliament in October, 1951, Party leader Nash wanted to know why New Zealand had not insisted on bringing the United Kingdom into ANZUS.

> "I would have been happy if the United Kingdom had been brought into the Pacific Security Pact because that would have maintained to the full our attachment to the United Kingdom and her attachment to us..".[3]

Nash went on to declare that New Zealand should "stress to the limit" that it would continue to practise the principle laid down by Savage in 1939 that where Britain went, New Zealand went.

> "I feel that everything we do ... without being slavish in following the United Kingdom, ought to be done after the fullest and closest discussion with Britain".

Nordmeyer concurred with his leader's sentiments. He told the House:

> "We recognise .. the British Commonwealth of Nations as an entity, in which our destiny, our future and our welfare is indissolubly linked".

Nordmeyer said that Savage's declaration applied with just as much force at that time as it did when it was uttered.

> "It expressed the sentiment of the whole of the people of this country. It certainly expresses the sentiments of honourable members on this side of the House".[4]

Nordmeyer worried that a time might come when a government came to power in the United States that was not friendly to the Commonwealth. This would, he thought, put New Zealand in a very awkward position. "For that reason I would hope we would not identify ourselves too closely with American practice and American policy".

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[3] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 295, p205, 9 October, 1951

[4] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 295, p273, 11 October, 1951

J. Mathison condemned the Tripartite Pact on the grounds that its narrow membership would inevitably lead to the domination of New Zealand policy by American policy that Nordmeyer feared. Mathison said that the membership of the United Kingdom and Canada would have ensured that New Zealand's Commonwealth interests continued to receive due consideration.[5]

In 1952, the Opposition pressed the government to raise the question of British membership of ANZUS at the first Council meeting in Honolulu. Nash asked the Minister of External Affairs in October whether he would initiate discussions with a view to making arrangements for the association of representatives of the United Kingdom in political and military conferences that might be held under the ANZUS pact. In explanation, the Labour leader said that unless this were done, the general agreement between New Zealand and Britain regarding their responsibilities for the defence of the British Commonwealth might be jeopardised. The United Kingdom needed to be fully informed through its own representatives of all New Zealand commitments.[6] It was as if Nash were suggesting that the government arrange for the United Kingdom to have a watching brief over New Zealand's actions.

Despite Labour's desire to see Britain in the Pact, the leadership accepted that American objections could not be overridden, and like the government, preferred a Pact without Britain to no Pact at all. The strength of the fear of Asia was such that the party did not want to do without a Pacific Pact.

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[5] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 295, p288, 11 October, 1951

[6] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 298, p2122, 16 October, 1952

When the party began to take public notice of the ever more intrusive events in South-east Asia, it recognised from the first, unlike the government, that there was a strong nationalist impulse under some of the Communist insurgencies in the region.

Nash, speaking in 1952 of the war in French Indo-China, put the matter beyond doubt in Labour eyes.

> "I would say that the trouble in Indo-China appears to arise from a revolt against colonialism".[7]

On the other hand, the party seemd to accept that Communist control of South-east Asia was undesirable. In 1949, Fraser's government had sponsored Bao Dai's Vietnamese government for membership of the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East at the expense of Ho Chi Minh's government. Nash now said that if one disregarded the political rights and wrongs, and considered the Indo-China problem from a military angle, then there could be a threat to Malaya "and other areas" if Indo-China went Communist and allied itself to the Chinese.[8] The Labour Party thus faced a contradiction in its South-east Asian policy right from the start. It recognised that the peoples of South-east Asian were often freely choosing Communism as a vehicle for their nationalist aspirations, but saw Communist governments as a threat to other governments in South-east Asia by virtue of their being inevitably willing instruments of aggressive great powers.

By the early fifties, in spite of the Fraser government's support for Bao Dai, Nash and the Labour Party felt that the French

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[7] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 297, p361, 16 July, 1952

[8] Ibid.

effort to deny the Vietminh power and to build up an alternative non-Communist government had been a failure. Nash told Parliament in August, 1953, that he did not think it was possible to get the Vietnamese to oppose the Vietminh.

> "They are not people of different areas. They are two bodies of people with slightly different ideas ... They are people who want their freedom and want to fight the French".[9]

The Labour leader said that the problem could not be solved by France's, or anyone else's, trying to put down the Vietminh by force. "To say that they are all Communists will not solve the problem". Combs, for one, concurred. He said that a book he had read had made it clear to him that people with political ideas poles apart - Communists and anti-Communists - were fighting with the Vietminh. He called for another look at the side New Zealand took before getting involved in such quarrels.[10] No Labour member, however, was prepared to take these views to their logical conclusion and call for the recognition of Ho Chi Minh's government or the suspension of help - albiet small - to the Associated State of Vietnam.

W.T. Anderton denounced the idea of a monolithic, Russian-directed Communism that was plotting to take over all of South-east Asia. He told Parliament that Westerners had become so obsessed with Russian communism that they believed that Communism in Asian countries must be of the same sort. They did not take into account the fact that Asian peoples were for the first time in their history beginning to think for themselves and to demand a way of life similar to that which New Zealand had enjoyed for some time. Anderton went so far as to say: "There is no such thing as Asian Communism".[11]

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[9] *N.Z.P.D.*vol. 299, p413, 12 August, 1953

[10] *N.Z.P.D.*vol. 299, p420-21, 12 August, 1953

[11] *N.Z.P.D.*vol. 299, p461, 13 August, 1953

In October, 1953, M. Moohan made essentially the same point. He said that it was not good enough to say that the fighting in South-east Asia was just part of a Communist plot, for anyone who knew the history of those countries knew that at the base of the troubles were pride of race and desire for self-determination.[12]

In his parliamentary report to the 1954 Labour Party Conference in May, Nash said that it was agreed among the party that the major factor in the Asian area was the desire of the peoples for self-rule and freedom from foreign domination.

> "It cannot be denied that the peoples of Asia, in their quest for self-determination, are often actively supported and assisted by local Communists and the Soviet bloc, and that Communists have gained control of some of the independence movements. This does not detract from the fact, however, that the pre-eminent motive behind much of the stirring of the peoples of Asia is the desire for national unity and national independence".[13]

When the Indo-China crisis came in the second quarter of 1954, the Labour Party was very firmly against intervention by the Western powers. In May, Nordmeyer, the Party President, said:

> "Most people in New Zealand will not agree to intervention. Many people in New Zealand feel that the country is being stampeded into a situation which is dangerous".[14]

In June, he publicly repeated his support for the British government's position and condemned what he believed to be the American interventionist line. Nordmeyer accused the government of servilely agreeing with the United States, a policy which he claimed was leading New Zealand into grave danger of being involved in a war in Indo-China. Nordmeyer said that he could see nothing in the

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[12] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 300, p1890, 20 October, 1953

[13] New Zealand Labour Party, *Report of the 38th Annual Conference*, p13

[14] *N.Z.H.* May 26, 1954, p8

current situation in Indo-China which would justify New Zealand's going to war there. He pointed out that the British government, in contrast, was refusing to be led by the nose by the United States.[15]

Looking back the next year on the developments of 1954 in Indo-China, Nash was to say:

> "While the leadership of the insurgent Vietminh was clearly Communist, it must have obvious to the most prejudiced that they enjoyed, and enjoy, a vast amount of popular support which is nourished by the aspirations of Asian peoples for freedom. All policies concerning Asia must take account of the powerful force of nationalism, not run blindly counter to it ..... it certainly cannot be crushed. Nor should it be. We must have sympathy for the legitimate aims and aspirations of Asians, peoples whose countries have for centuries been little more than bargaining counters and spheres of influence for European powers".[16]

Nash said in Parliament in July 1954 that intervention by outside nations in Indo-China could not succeed because the Indo-Chinese people were giving their strength to the Vietminh in the fight for independence. While the movement was organised and armed from the outside, its basic strength came from the Vietnamese people. He said that the Vietminh leaders were capable of governing well for the advantage of the people, and the people obviously wanted them to do that. The only solution to the Indo-China problem lay in the people of Indo-China governing themselves. Nash went on to say that he believed that Indo-China could govern itself without there being any danger of Communist expansion further south and west.[17] Strangely, though, he had preceded these remarks with a reminder of Indo-China's strategic position for the West. The Japanese, he said,

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15 See *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 303, p863, 3 August, 1954

16 New Zealand Labour Party; *Report of 39th Annual Conference*, p18

17 *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 303, p216, 6 July, 1954

had attacked Malaya from Indo-China.

> "Whoever is in charge of Indo-China and controls it completely, if evil and powerful, menaces Burma, Thailand, Malaya, Singapore, and China itself".[18]

This seeming contradiction has its explanation in the qualification "if evil and powerful". The uncertainty, in Nash's eyes, would appear to have been the degree of friendliness between the Vietminh and Russia and China, and the extent of the latter's ambitions. The Labour Party's natural inclinations were to some extent constrained by the suspicions and fears of the Cold War.

These uncertainties would seem to have been behind the Party's decision not to oppose the proposed South-east Asia Treaty Organisation. In a note probably made on June 28, 1954, Nash asked himself what the attitude of the party to a Pact should be.

> "If we believe that we are in imminent danger of Communist military aggression, then we must ally ourselves with all anti-Communists, however unsavoury".[19]

This aggression was likely to be carried out by China. Nash admitted that the Pact could be a fatal error if China were not, in fact, contemplating aggression, but was motivated mainly by a deep suspicion of the motives of the West. A Pact would only increase that suspicion. Mathison, speaking in Parliament in July, said that the only exception he could take to Webb's July 6 speech was to the question of the urgent necessity of a South-east Asian pact. "We would urge that more care be exercised there in case we get ourselves and other people into trouble".[20]

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[18] Ibid., p215

[19] Nash Papers, Bundle 69

[20] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 303, p224, 6 July, 1954.

Nordmeyer was worried by the fact that most of the non-Communist Asian states regarded the Indo-China War as one for national independence rather than one of Communist aggression, and not something that needed to be dealt with by a military alliance. If a South-east Asian alliance of any sort were to be established, then it could only be useful if the currently sceptical countries - India, Pakistan, Ceylon and Burma - were included.

> "If they refrain from joining in, or are hostile to it, then a very unfortunate situation will be created in the whole of that area, because the impression will be that what is known as Western imperialism is imposing its will upon a people who are asserting their national independence, and military arguments that it is not desirable that Communism should be allowed to come any further southwards will carry very little weight".

Nordmeyer stated that it was his view that New Zealand needed the goodwill of India and others of her view more than it needed any South-east Asian alliance.

> "I think that if there is to be an alliance ... the reasons for its establishment should be more clearly demonstrated to this House and to the country than has been done up to the present".[21]

Nordmeyer concluded by observing that raising the living standards of the people of South-east Asia would do far more for the defence of New Zealand in the long run than any Pact.

W.T. Anderton considered that China's presence in Indo-China had been brought about by Western policy in the area rather than by any Chinese desire to embark on aggression throughout Asia.

> "Had France accepted realistically her responsibilities in Indo-China and granted independence to that country, the struggle would not have taken place".

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[21] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 303, p262, 6 July, 1954

In other words, China intervened to help the Vietnamese because the French had tried to hang on.

> "Those people who talk of the Communist danger are blinded to the realities of the situation ... We must never forget that the problems of Asia cannot be solved in a way that runs counter to the will of the people of Asia".[22]

C.S. Stewart said that American policy had been more against Communism than for Asian independence.

> "These people require sympathy in their aspirations and their struggles for independence, not the threat of armed strength and the alignment of all the forces of the Western powers against them. It is their country".[23]

The party's deputy-leader, C.F. Skinner, told the House that many people confused the upsurge of nationalism in the East with the spread of Communism.

> "I have no doubt that Communists have exploited the position on every occasion, but just because the people of some country have decided to rebel against their government ... we should not condemn them ... by saying they are just a crowd of Communists".

Skinner went on to cite the case of the Huk rebellion in the Philippines, which he said was basically a movement for agrarian reform, but condemned as a Communist movement. "I have no doubt that the Huk movement was exploited by the Communists but in general it was not a Communist movement". The situation in Burma was similar to that in the Philippines, he said.

> "We should not brush these things aside and call them Communist uprisings. They may be Communist-inspired and supported ..".

With this attitude Skinner was suspicious of the proposed South-east

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[22] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 303, p277, 8 July, 1954

[23] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 303, p289, 8 July, 1954

Asian alliance. He suspected any arrangement which would pit some South-east Asian nations against others on an ideological basis, and much preferrred Eden's Eastern Locarno proposal. The alliance, he said, was not feasible unless India were a member, and Skinner could not see India willing to become a member unless Indonesia, Indo-China and China were members, too. Any alliance that did not include these principal countries of Asia would break down.[24]

Nevertheless, there was in the minds of party members an evident conflict between fealty to the ideal of self-determination for peoples, and the demands of New Zealand's security as they saw them. P.G. Connolly's remarks epitomised this conflict as had his leader's.

Connolly believed that responsibility for the Indo-China War could be laid "fairly and squarely" at the feet of the French government for rejecting the proposals put forward in 1946 by Ho Chi Minh.

> "There is no doubt that the situation developed from a colonial dispute and unrest among the people".[25]

The leadership of the Vietminh might be Communistic, but the war was only partly an ideological and international one. However, Connolly foresaw "great difficulties" in South-east Asia if there should be a complete change of regime in Vietnam. He believed that Malaya would eventually come under increased Communist pressure.

After the cease-fire in Indo-China on July 21, 1954, Labour members did not oppose the creation of the South-east Asia Collective Defence Treaty. Members who spoke on the subject confined their comments to advocating a greater emphasis in its provisions on economic development. M. Moohan, said in Parliament on August 24

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[24] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 303, pp298-299, 8 July, 1954

[25] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 303, p283, 8 July, 1954

that the people of New Zealand would be very sceptical of any organisation that tried to make New Zealand take the part that France had tried to maintain for eight years, or meant that New Zealand would be a party to keeping Indo-China in the position it had been under French domination, but he did not call for New Zealand's non-participation in the Treaty's drafting.[26]

The published draft of the treaty did place the Associated State of Vietnam under the protective cover of the signatories, but Labour members did not object. After the treaty's signing and its very hasty presenting to Parliament, Nash welcomed it as the extended Pacific Pact including Britain that Labour had always wanted.

> "I consider it is really an extension of the ANZUS Pact, with the advantage on this occasion that we have in it the United Kingdom and Pakistan ... It is a great improvement on the ANZUS Pact".[27]

Nash regretted that India, Burma and Ceylon were not associated with the Pact. He justified its utility after the settlement of the Indo-China War by saying that there were still "many difficulties" to be faced in the Pacific area and that they could be faced the better because of SEATO. Defences could not be let down against a menace he considered "real and certain", unless the West could find some way of reconciling its way of life with that of the Communist powers. Despite his belief that the Vietminh were entitled to Vietnam, Nash still distrusted Communist ambitions.

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[26] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 304, p1360, 24 August, 1954

[27] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 304, p2104, 30 September, 1954

At the opening of the next Parliament, in March, 1955, the National government announced its proposal to contribute troops to a Commonwealth Strategic Reserve in Malaya. These troops were to take part in counter-insurgency operations there. The Labour Party offered no objection in principle to the use of New Zealand troops to help suppress Communist insurgents in a British colony, and in this its attitude differed from that which it had adopted in respect to suppressing a Communist-led insurgency in a French colony less than a year previously. The Labour Party questioned only the necessity for the move, since it was known that the terrorist situation was well in hand.

Holland announced the government proposal in Parliament on the evening of Thursday, March 24, 1955. Only Nash on the Labour side had an opportunity to speak in reply that night, and he kept his speech to other matters of external affairs. Parliament was due to sit again on Tuesday, March 29, in the evening, and the parliamentary Labour Party decided to consider its reaction to the government move that day.[28] On March 28 it was reported from Kuala Lumpur that the Malayan Labour Party had issued a statement protesting against the sending of New Zealand and Australian troops to Malaya. The statement had said:

> "We hope it is not the intention of the New Zealand and Australian governments to help prolong the colonial rule in this country".[29]

Nash, on reading this, decided to consult the other Labour Party of the region - that of Singapore. On March 29, Nash cabled

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[28] Nash telegram to Marshall 29.3.55. Nash Papers, Bundle 69

[29] *Waikato Times*, March 29, 1955, p7 (N.Z.P.A. - Kuala Lumpur)

David Marshall, the leader of the Singapore Labour Party, saying that he would much appreciate the opinion of the Labour Party of Singapore on the New Zealand decision, in view of the reported protest of the Labour Party of Malaya. Nash told Marshall that the subject of sending troops was under consideration that day.[30] Marshall's telegram came back the same day. It said:

> "The suggestion that New Zealand should send token troops has been received with disquiet. We know New Zealand for a friendly, modest country, and we do not like the implication that it is getting into the business of imperialism. The suggestion may be unjust, but it is difficult to understand what legitimate reasons there are for New Zealand to involve herself in this territory".[31]

That evening, Parliament resumed the External Affairs debate for three hours. On the Labour side, only Nash and Deputy-leader Skinner had time to speak. Nash was finishing off the speech he had started on March 24, and in relation to Malaya asked only if the Malayan contribution was primarily to do with SEATO or to do with terrorist control. It was not until Skinner spoke that there was some indication of the line that the party was developing.

There was no objection in principle to use of New Zealand troops on internal security duties in a British colony, but Skinner questioned the necessity of the move.

> "... the Prime Minister told us on Thursday night that the situation in Malaya is well in hand. The terrorists have been driven out of seven of the states, and only two states remain to be cleared. Yet we have all this secrecy and a special session of Parliament".

Skinner felt that the Prime Minister was making a case for not sending a force to Malaya rather than strengthening his case for sending one.

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[30] Nash papers, Bundle 69

[31] Ibid.

> "If we have so far overcome this difficulty as to have terrorists remaining in only two states now, then surely there is a less urgent need for sending troops today than there was a few years ago".[32]

However, if the redeployment of forces were part of overall Commonwealth defence strategy - that is, if New Zealand forces were for the external defence of Malaya - then the deputy-leader of the Opposition was quite prepared to go along with the proposal.

> "New Zealand's future is irrevocably linked with the British Commonwealth of Nations ... New Zealand is quite prepared to put her whole weight behind the Commonwealth at any time".

When the debate resumed on the afternoon of March 30, the next Labour speaker, the new member Holloway, reiterated Skinner's themes. He said:

> "From the point of view of principle I do not think many people in New Zealand could rightly object to the basing of New Zealand personnel in Malaya ..".[33]

He went on to question, as Skinner had done, the necessity for troops to deal with the insurgency.

> "I feel there is plenty of room for doubt about the need to raise a ground force for police action in Malaya".

He also questioned any larger SEATO role for the proposed force.

> "If it is to be used for tactical purposes under SEATO, there is room for further discussion.. If we are supposed to defend Thailand or the Indo-Chinese states, we are being asked to do something that is militarily impossible, so much so that the United States has refused to commit herself to any military undertaking in the area".

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[32] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 305, p62, 29 March, 1955

[33] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 305, p86, 30 March, 1955

P.G. Connolly was principally concerned with New Zealand's Commonwealth duty.

> "We function as an independent nation within the Commonwealth, and as a full partner must play our part in Commonwealth defence ..... I am all for strengthening Malaya".[34]

Later he said:

> "I believe that the new strategy for the Commonwealth is to save Malaya and to keep the Communist forces further from the shores of Australia and New Zealand..".

J. Mathison, however, returned to the theme of the utility of sending troops to overkill an already dying insurgency. He could not understand why it was suddenly necessary for New Zealand to take part in the anti-terrorist campaign in Malaya.

> "I would remind the government that this Malaya trouble has been going on since 1948 ... Why has [the government] not done something before this to relieve the burden of the United Kingdom?.. Why the urgency of the matter now? Has the situation in Malaya deteriorated? We are given to understand that it has not ...".[35]

Mathison went on to say, though, that if the situation had deteriorated, then the New Zealand contribution was far too small. Like Holloway, Mathison had obviously no objection in principle to the sending of New Zealand troops to Malaya. He said: "This is a British possession", and that he was satisfied that it was being subject to a Communist-controlled effort to take it over.

M. Moohan, the last Labour speaker of the day, also questioned the utility of sending New Zealand troops, but he objected on different grounds from his colleagues. First, he did not accept that the

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[34] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 305, p97, 30 March, 1955

[35] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 305, p104, 30 March, 1955

defence of Malaya was a national interest of New Zealand, and secondly, he did not think that troops of any nationality could solve the insurgency problem in Malaya. He asked the House:

> "Does the position in Malaya affect the security and peace of this Dominion?"

and answered himself:

> "... There are some who say it does. I can only say I entirely disagree with them".[36]

Moohan referred to the apathy of some people in Malaya towards the terrorists and said that New Zealand should understand it.

> "To say that 375,000 trained men could not dispose of 5000 terrorists is just an insult to people's intelligence. The terrorists must be getting support from some part of the population".

Moohan quoted Woodrow Wyatt, the British Labour Parliamentarian, to the effect that the war against the Communists was not Britain's but Malaya's, and the Malayans had to be convinced, through economic and political reform, that this was true. Moohan noted that three Malayan political organisations - the United Malayan National Organisation, the Malayan Chinese Organisation, and the Malayan Labour Party - had been reported as viewing with concern the sending of troops from Australia and New Zealand to Malaya. Because of this, Moohan suggested, New Zealand should wait until a Malayan government was elected, and discuss the matter with it.

On March 31, the party caucus apparently met again for a further consideration of the issue. Nash made some brief notes for the occasion.[37] His first observation was that Singapore was the

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[36] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 305, p113, 30 March, 1955

[37] Nash papers, Bundle 132

base from which the South Pacific would be defended. A little further down the page, he asked:

> "If Malaya is to be defended, should we leave the full cost and responsibility to the United Kingdom?"

A further note elaborated:

> "Can we say, send the British, the Gurkhas, but we want to be out?"[38]

As if in answer to David Marshall's charge of New Zealand's propping up imperialism, Nash observed that even when Malaya was self-governing, the United Kingdom would still be responsible for the country's external defence. A further point, however, was that New Zealand would be helping to establish the conditions for self-government. Nash recorded his opinion that the commitment of the commando unit was really to the South-east Asia Treaty Organisation. Interspersed with these lines of thought were some basic political considerations. Nash noted that Prime Minister Holland was "fishing for opposition from the Labour Party",[39] and he concluded that the party would lose support if opposition was the sole policy.

In these notes, considerations of *realpolitik* predominated. Nash recognised that New Zealand had an interest in the retention of British military power in the Pacific, and that that power was based on continuing control of Singapore and its strategic hinterland, Malaya. It followed that if New Zealand wanted British protection, it was in its interest to help Britain retain control of Malaya. In this instance, Nash reached the same conclusions about New Zealand's interests as had the National Party.

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[38] Ibid.

[39] Ibid.

In the debate that day, R. Boord gave primary emphasis in his speech on the issue to New Zealand's Commonwealth duty. Boord stated his belief that

> ".. our defence, and our existence as a sovereign nation, is wholely tied up with the existence and defence of the British Commonwealth of Nations, and the Western world ... It is therefore our bounden duty, in peace or in war, to make a full contribution to that defence..".[40]

A.H. Nordmeyer refused to toe the Nash line when he spoke. He continued to question the necessity and wisdom of sending the troops. He said that many people thought that the sending of New Zealand forces to Malaya would provoke a resentment among the Malayan people that would far outweigh any advantage to be gained from sending them. Nordmeyer believed that the decision to protect New Zealand's security in Malaya made no strategic sense. What, he asked, if Indonesia were to turn Communist? What would be the value of a "Cold War front" in Malaya then?[41]

When Nash wrote to Chief Minister Marshall to tell him of the party's decision on April 4, the Labour leader's justification of the decision was in terms of New Zealand's obligations to Britain, not in terms of the Malayan people.

> "The major ground upon which the Labour Party in New Zealand acquiesced in the proposed new arrangement was exclusively on the basis of assisting the United Kingdom to meet the commitments she has in that part of the world".[42]

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[40] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 305, p131, 31 March, 1955

[41] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 305, p147, 31 March, 1955

[42] Nash papers, Bundle 132

At the Labour Party's annual conference in May, Nash told the delegates that the government had been extremely vague about the relationship of the Malayan proposals to SEATO, and that no definite information had been given that the forces were to be used exclusively to deal with terrorists.

> "In these circumstances, the party was placed in a particularly difficult position. No objection can logically be raised against our assisting Britain to remove the Communist terrorist activity which is the biggest stumbling block to Malaya's progress towards self-government and development - and qualified approval was therefore given..".[43]

Nash said that the party's parliamentarians had also stressed the fact that the Malayan peoples had been exploited in the past and that they should receive far more benefit from the wealth that their country produced.

> "It was urged that progress towards self-government ... should be accelerated. It is a greater mistake to be too late than too early in granting self-government".

The conference unanimously endorsed the despatch of the Commando force to Malaya as part of New Zealand's responsibility for Commonwealth defence. The endorsement was qualified only by the condition that steps be taken to give self-government to the Malayan people as soon as possible.[44] The conference did not pass without a few dissenting voices being sounded on the subject, however. Party President Nordmeyer in his opening address had derided the idea of Malaya's being New Zealand's front-line of defence.

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[43] New Zealand Labour Party, *Report of the 39th Annual Conference*, pp21-22

[44] *O.D.T.* May 19, 1955, p13

> "To talk of defending New Zealand in terms of the last war's appropriate strategy is to demonstrate a complete failure to face up to reality".

At the end of the month, Nash drafted a formal statement of the Labour Party's Malayan policy. This statement, however, was devoted entirely to the moral aspect of sending troops to help put down a rebellion in a colony. This aspect had been virtually ignored during the debates, but Nash apparently now felt the need for the Labour Party to put forward a rationale for a policy which might seem to run in conflict with some of its principles.

> "The New Zealand Labour Party supports New Zealand assistance to the United Kingdom in the eradication of the terrorist activity in Malaya. It is not felt that such support ... in any way contravenes Labour's principles of maximum encouragement of development among all peoples - rather, I believe, it is conducive to those ends".

The draft went on to justify this last assertion by saying that terrorist activity was "the greatest stumbling block" to the legitimate aspirations of the people of Malaya being realised. It quoted Anthony Eden to this effect. The party had decided that the terrorist activity in Malaya did not - as it did in Vietnam - constitute a legitimate expression of Malayan desire for self-determination.

> "Plainly, no real progress towards genuine self-government on a stable and progressive basis can be achieved while terrorism and guerilla warfare exists. There are grounds for hope that indigenous political parties democratic in outlook and grounded on popular support are developing in Malaya .. to the stage where the successful fulfilment of self-government is within their capabilities. This is the avenue which should and must be pursued".[46]

There was, then, a valid indigenous alternative to the guerilla movement in the party's eyes. The draft noted that Britain was prepared to grant Malaya internal self-government as soon as it seemed possible that a democratic system of government could be established.

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[45] *O.D.T.* May 17, 1955, p9

[46] Nash papers, Bundle 69

As yet, terrorism prevented that possibility. The draft did not mention the function of the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve.

In contrast to the attitude of the New Zealand Labour Party, the Australian Labor Party strongly opposed the Australian government's despatch of troops to Malaya. The Australian Labor Party believed that a settlement of the Malayan problem should be achieved by negotiating with the guerillas rather than by suppressing them.[47] Australian troops, it claimed, would encourage rather than subdue strife.

At the New Zealand Labour Party's 1956 conference, in May of that year, a remit calling for the recall of troops from both Malaya and Korea was recommended for rejection by the committee considering it.[48]

When, in 1957, an announcement was made by the Prime Minister that New Zealand was increasing its ground force contribution to the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve, only a few Labour parliamentarians spoke out against the move. In general, naturally enough, they were those who had opposed the stationing of New Zealand troops in Malaya in the first place. P.G. Connolly, however, who had been all for strengthening Malaya in 1955, now said that it would be far better to spend hundreds of thousands of pounds on economic and technical assistance to Malaya than it would be to send some nine hundred infantrymen there.[49]

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[47] Albinski, H.S. "*Australian Attitudes and Policies Towards China*", p179

[48] New Zealand Labour Party: *Report of the Fortieth Annual Conference*, p38

[49] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 311, p45, 13 June, 1957

W.W. Freer agreed. The problem in Malaya was economic and social, not military, he said. New Zealand could not succeed if she accepted the militarist argument of meeting ideology with force. It would be better to keep the force within New Zealand and to use the funds saved to improve economic conditions in Malaya.

> "Unless democratic governments in South-east Asia can rapidly develop their economies, the Communist advance there will be inevitable".[50]

Freer also thought that no matter what the Malayan government's attitude to the presence of foreign troops was, New Zealand would do better to wonder what the attitude of the Malayan people would be.

> ".. although in our own minds we may possibly justify the existence of such forces, in the minds of the Asian people the forces are not justified".

Freer pointed to two recent examples of incidents in Asian countries involving foreign troops: riots in Japan and Formosa.

A.H. Nordmeyer, speaking during a Parliamentary defence debate the next month, was unsure whether even the Malayan government would remain content for very long with a foreign force stationed within its shores.[51] C.R. Carr asked the Prime Minister in this debate whether he would postpone arrangements for sending more troops and "concentrate rather on economic assistance". Holland replied that the government believed that the despatch of a battalion of troops to Malaya was an important contribution to the maintenance of "peace, stability and political freedom in the area".[52]

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[50] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 311, p64, 13 June, 1957

[51] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 312, p1141, 24 July, 1957

[52] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 312, p905-6, 16 July, 1957

Most members of the Labour Party were, however, in favour of a continuing military commitment to Malaya because they were committed to the idea of New Zealand's doing its part for Commonwealth defence. Party leader Nash stated in May, 1957, that Commonwealth defence should be shared more equitably, with a larger contribution coming from New Zealand.[53] If defence were going to be a matter for the Commonwealth, he said, the cost should be shared among those countries receiving the benefit. This statement was made shortly before the Prime Minister 's announcement that a battalion of infantry would replace the commando force in Malaya. After calling for a greater contribution, Nash was hardly likely to object when it was made.

1957 was election year, and in July, R.T. Boord was saying that the Labour Party would promote the effective defence of New Zealand, and that this policy included meeting New Zealand's obligations to her fellow members of the Commonwealth. "From our obligations, of course, come our commitments; that is, our share in the defence of the Commonwealth".[54]

At the 1957 general election, the Labour Party returned to power in New Zealand. Its policy towards the Malayan commitment had been fixed two years before, and most of the Cabinet were supporters of the commitment. Nash became Minister of External Affairs as well as Prime Minister, while Skinner was Minister of Agriculture, Boord Minister of Customs, and Mathison Minister of Transport. P.G. Connolly, who had suggested increased technical aid instead of troops in the defence debate, became the Minister of Defence. Two doubters held Cabinet rank - Moohan as Minister

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[53] *O.D.T.* May 23, 1957, p5

[54] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 312, p1090, 23 July, 1957

of Railways, and Nordmeyer as Minister of Finance. Freer was not elected to Cabinet.

On New Year's Day, the new Prime Minister outlined some of the foreign policy goals the new administration intended to pursue. Apart from the usual commitments to full support for the United Nations and to strengthening the Commonwealth, Nash pledged to "continue assistance to the less developed countries, especially in Asia, principally through the Colombo Plan", and also that New Zealand would fully honour its treaty obligations under SEATO and ANZUS and its defence commitments in Malaya.[55] Indeed, Nash considered military aid an indirect form of economic assistance in that it ensured the conditions for growth.

> "The economic development of Asian countries depends largely on their political stability and we have done our best through our membership of SEATO to assist nations who have asked for assistance in protecting themselves against the twin threats of external aggression and internal subversion. Malaya is not a member of SEATO, but we are helping her by contributing forces to the Commonwealth contingents stationed there".[56]

When the new government released a defence review in mid-1958, it was revealed that Labour had taken over the strategic assumptions and policies of its predecessor.

The Review began by reiterating the government's determination to fulfil all obligations and undertakings accepted by New Zealand,[57] and then went on to say that the government attached the "greatest importance" to the maintenance of the Commonwealth partnership.

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[55] *External Affairs Review*, January, 1958, p15

[56] *Dominion*, January 2, 1958

[57] *Review of Defence Policy 1958*, A.J.H.R. A-12 1958, p3

In what amounted to an informal guarantee of Malaya, the Review said that despite the absence of formal agreements,

> "a member of the Commonwealth attacked by an aggressor would not look in vain for the support of fellow members".[58]

After the expression of fealty to the Commonwealth, the Review turned to South-east Asia. It declared that New Zealand

> "recognised the importance to her own security of assisting the free democracies of South-east Asia to maintain the independence achieved .. since World War Two".[59]

New Zealand's security would be threatened if the independence of South-east Asian countries were under threat. The reference to maintaining the independence of the South-east Asian democracies assumed that there was a threat to that independence. Some paragraphs further on, China and the Soviet Union were portrayed as the threat:

> " .. the forces of the Sino-Soviet bloc facing South-east Asia remain very powerful indeed ..".

The Review stated that although the government believed that the danger of overt aggression in South-east Asia was not an immediate one, this situation of non-danger was related directly to the military strength of the free countries in the area.

> "The need for the free countries of South-east Asia and those countries which, like New Zealand, share a concern for the security of this vital area, to maintain defensive capacity to deter any would-be aggressor ... continues to be a basic condition for the maintenance of peace and stability".[60]

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[58] Ibid, paragraph 5.

[59] *Review of Defence Policy* p5, paragraph 13

[60] Defence Review, p5, paragraph 12

The Review said that the 1955 decision to set up the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve

> "recognised the essential need for ... forces stationed in the danger area able to react immediately to the threat of aggression".

It went on to say that the Labour government believed that the stationing of troops in Malaya as part of the Reserve would continue to serve two purposes - to act as a deterrent to any potential aggressor, and to ensure that in the event of aggression the aggressor could be repelled.

The Review made no mention of the Reserve's use for internal security purposes in Malaya. However, it did say that in the previous decade the free nations of South-east Asia had been confronted with a series of conflicts ranging from armed insurrection to limited war on the scale of the Indo-Chinese and Korean Wars, and that

> "willingness to meet these threats as soon as, and wherever they arise, must be an integral part of any co-ordinated plan to ensure peace and stability in South-East Asia".[61]

The reference to armed insurrection would seem to indicate a willingness on New Zealand's part to be involved in co-operative efforts to counter insurgency, as well as to resist external aggression.

When Nash made his first trip to Malaya, in March, 1958, and spoke of the role of the New Zealand forces, the emphasis seemed less on external dangers than on preserving democratic government from overthrow from within. In a radio broadcast from Kuala Lumpur, Nash told the Malayans that New Zealand had a "positive concern" to see that Singapore and Malaya remained free. He said that the countries of

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[61] Op Cit, p6, paragraph 18

South-east Asia should, like New Zealand, be able to choose freely the government that they wanted.

The Prime Minister went on to say:

> "The security of this part of the world is of special interest to us ... We do not take refuge in our remoteness because we believe that our security is closely bound with yours. We believe, too, that we must be prepared to back with deeds our faith in the virtue and dignity of democracy. That was why New Zealand had forces in the area fighting the Communist terrorists".[62]

At a press conference held on his arrival in Singapore, Nash pledged:

> "So long as the Malayan people want us, we will stay. We only want to help Malaya and foster the British way of life".[63]

The New Zealand Prime Minister seemed willing to equate the Malayan government with the Malayan people, and be quite open about New Zealand's forces being there to defend the system that had brought the Malayan government to power.

When Nash revisited Malaya in June, 1960, he again intimated that New Zealand forces were in the country to defend the people of Malaya against an enemy in their midst. Addressing the New Zealand battalion, Nash said:

> "Your presence here is a guarantee to the Malayan people that terror won't win. You can't maintain a good government against a background of fear and terrorism".

He then moved on from concern for the rights of Malayans to the self-interest New Zealand had in keeping forces in Malaya.

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[62] *O.D.T.* March 5, 1958, p3 (N.Z.P.A. Singapore)

[63] *O.D.T.* March 4, 1958, p3 (N.Z.P.A. Singapore)

> "By helping to keep this country free, you are helping to keep our country free. Unless the countries in this part of the world remain democratic, with governments of the people's choice, our own country is endangered".[64]

Governments that were not of the people's choice posed a threat to New Zealand.

In October, 1958, the government established a separate High Commission in Malaya, and Nash said that the creation of a separate diplomatic post was an indication of the special importance which New Zealand attached to the development of closer relations with Malaya.[65]

In March, 1959, the government became formally associated with the Anglo-Malayan Defence Agreement. Although New Zealand's actual obligations were not spelled out in the letter of association, the Malayan government interpreted the association as meaning that New Zealand was pledged to defend Malaya. The Malayan Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman, said in Wellington in January, 1960: "We have a defence agreement with Britain, New Zealand and Australia, and they would help us if we were attacked".[66]

Labour in Opposition had supported the National government's proposal to send troops to Malaya primarily because the Labour Party's sense of Commonwealth duty was as strong as that of its opponents. It had justified the use of these troops for internal security duties in terms of helping to bring about conditions for self-government, believing that the guerilla movement did not represent

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[64] Nash papers, Bundle 201 (Press releases, South-east Asia) Press statement , Kuala Lumpur, 6 June, 1960

[65] *O.D.T.* October 16, 1958, p5

[66] *O.D.T.* January 21, 1960, p4 (N.Z.P.A. Wellington)

a substantial section of the Malayan population. In office, the party defended a continuing commitment to Malaya with reference to New Zealand's security interest in seeing that Malaya remained free of Communist control. That control, it was believed, meant subservience to a Great Power hostile to New Zealand, and thus was strategically undesirable.

The Labour government's announced concern to preserve the governments of South-east Asia against Sino-Soviet aggression gave it an interest in continuing to support the South-east Asia Treaty Organisation. The Prime Minister said of SEATO in 1958 that there was no doubting the role it was playing as a stabilising force in encouraging the development and preservation of freedom in South-east Asia.[67] However, the Laotian crisis, which broke out in 1959, seemed to demonstrate that the Labour government did not intend that SEATO should be used to help suppress internal rebellion - even if Communist inspired, - in member or protected states. In this attitude, the party denied the substance of its Malayan policy.

War between the Royal Lao government and Communist guerillas broke out in July, 1959, and it was suspected that the Communist activity was directed by North Vietnam, which had been agitating for the reinstatement of the authority of the International Control Commission over Laos.

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67 Statements by Ministers of the Crown 1958, p8, 27 February 1958

The New Zealand government's first comment on the crisis came on August 3. Nash said that if the Laotian crisis were to require any international action, the situation should be referred to the United Nations, but this was a matter primarily for the Laotian government to decide.[68]

The United States government was in favour of a Laotian appeal to the South-east Asia Treaty Organisation, and military intervention by members of the latter. On August 6, indeed, the Deputy-Prime Minister of Thailand offered to make Thai troops available for any SEATO military action.[69] New Zealand, however, besides wishing to act only in a United Nations context, wanted definite proof of aggression against Laos by North Vietnam before favouring a military solution by any international body.

On September 3, Nash made a further statement on Laos, saying that the extreme difficulty in ascertaining the facts, especially as regards the degree of external intervention, was one of the most disturbing features of the situation.[70]

> "I am more than ever convinced that the present situation calls for some fact-finding body which could report on the nature and extent of the emergency".

Nash repeated his August assertion that the United Nations was the body to deal with the crisis. Four days later, the Prime Minister said that neither the United Nations nor SEATO were likely to take positive action in Laos without more information on the extent of external interference.[71]

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[68] *E.A.R.* August, 1959, p13

[69] Ibid. p21

[70] *E.A.R.* September, 1959, p17

[71] Ibid., p17

On September 8, Nash made a special statement to Parliament on Laos, in the light of the Laotian government's request to the United Nations to despatch an Emergency Force. He said that New Zealand would support any United Nations action which might be considered appropriate.

Nash reminded his audience that New Zealand was a member of the South-east Asia Treaty Organisation, which was interested in any developments which could affect the security and stability of the South-east Asian region, and which could be appealed to by the Laotian government. The Prime Minister expressed the hope that the United Nations would be capable of dealing with the situation. Nash said that he thought that it would be justifiable to assume that the anti-government forces in Laos were Laotian, but supplied from the outside.

> "As I see it, there is no evidence of aggression from outside, and as a government we felt that it was right to ascertain the facts".

The government on this basis supported a United Nations fact-finding group being sent to Laos. After the report of this body, New Zealand would consider whether it was necessary to afford protection to Laos in terms of New Zealand's treaty obligations.[72]

It was a somewhat defensive statement, and the tone reflected the heavy American pressure New Zealand had been under to join with the United States in military intervention. Nash himself was to hint at this pressure in his New Year's Eve message to the nation in 1960, just after his government had been defeated at the General Election.

> "We have taken, certainly, an independent line on many current problems, particularly Laos and Seato ..."[73]

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[72] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 320, pp1707-1708, 8 September, 1959

[73] *O.D.T.* December 31, 1960, p4

A.H. Nordmeyer, Minister of Finance in the Nash government, recalled in 1974 that there was

> "fairly considerable American pressure to get New Zealand involved militarily in Laos. Secretary of State Dulles [sic] in particular was most anxious that New Zealand participate in military intervention that the Americans thought justified. Mr Nash very firmly opposed any suggestion that New Zealand as a part of SEATO should become involved there".[74]

Nash's Permanent Secretary of External Affairs, A.D. McIntosh, wrote in 1962 that in Laos in 1959,

> "Great Power attention was concentrated on a military solution. To the government of the day it seemed unwise to concentrate on military planning and manoeuvres".[75]

New Zealand's stand was, however, not taken alone. On this occasion, as in Indo-China in 1954, all of New Zealand's other significant allies were opposed to military action, too. Britain and Australia, joined this time by France, urged the United States not to seek a military solution. An officer of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, W.B. Harland, wrote in 1970:

> "Once the United States had committed itself to the defence of South-east Asia, we became concerned that it might go too far. In 1959 and 1960 we joined the British and the French in trying to restrain the Americans from pressing the Communists in Laos".[76]

Australia's Minister of External Affairs, R.G. Casey, recorded in his diary that Australia, too, was not in favour of a military

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[74] Nordmeyer, Interview, 30.5.74. Dulles had died in May, 1959. The Secretary of State in September was Christian A. Herter.

[75] McIntosh, "Administration of an Independent New Zealand Foreign Policy" in Larkin, T.C. *New Zealand's External Relations* p59.

[76] Harland, W.B. "New Zealand's Relations with the U.S.A." in *New Zealand Foreign Affairs Review* May 1970, p9

solution in Laos.[77]

When Nash attended the ANZUS Council meeting for 1959 in October, he was outspoken against American views on Laos. Nash told the American Secretary of State, Herter, that the United States was trying to maintain the type of government that it wanted in Laos, and not the type the Laotians wanted. He asked whether the West had any right to interfere in the internal politics of Laos, and why American aid to the Laotian government was right, while Vietnamese aid to the Pathet Lao was wrong.[78] Apparently, Nash accepted that the Pathet Lao were a legitimate claimant to governmental power in Laos, while the Laotian government was of dubious legitimacy. Nash told the Americans that an intervention by SEATO would be seen not as saving Laos from outside aggression but as interference in Laotian internal affairs. If the Vietnamese or Chinese intervened, then New Zealand would live up to her SEATO obligations. He was worried that SEATO military planners were planning for armed intervention before there was any political agreement. Sinclair claims that Casey did not support Nash, but is not clear about whether the non-support was on the planning issue, American aid to the Laotian government, or the wider issue of military intervention.

When the United Nations investigating committee reported that the problems of Laos stemmed primarily from internal weaknesses and could best be solved by economic aid, the Labour government was only too willing to make a gesture of support. In December, 1959, it informed the Secretary-General that New Zealand would support United

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[77] Casey, R. G. *Australian Foreign Minister: The Diaries of R.G. Casey* p323

[78] Sinclair, K. *Walter Nash* p323-324

Nations plan for aid to Laos, and early the next year a plan was chosen. The Secretary of External Affairs later commented that New Zealand's airlift of educational supplies to Laos in 1960

> "showed our friends that while we might make difficulties over military measures from which it was felt that the results would be doubtful, New Zealand was prepared to do something - that objections to one course did not simply mean that we wanted to do nothing".[79]

The government was not willing to see SEATO used as an instrument for suppressing insurrection in Laos, even if that insurrection were stimulated by a foreign, Communist power. In Malaya, however, where a similar situation was presumed to prevail, the Labour government was prepared to let its troops on the spot take part in internal security duties. The conclusion is hard to escape that the Commonwealth context accounted for the difference. In Malaya, the government was honouring a commitment made by its predecessor, whereas an intervention in Laos was a fresh decision, but the party had not objected to the Malayan commitment when in Opposition.

Conclusion

The Labour Party's approach to policy decisions involving Malaya and-Indo China in the 1950s did not differ significantly from the approach of the National Party. For both parties, Commonwealth loyalty was a major determinant of action, as was the assumption that Communist regimes in South-east Asia would inevitably be agents of a hostile China and thus a threat to the security of New Zealand. Labour parliamentarians had an appreciation that their opponents seemed to lack, of the strong nationalist elements that often

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[79] McIntosh, Op Cit. p60

lay at the back of Communist insurgency, but this did not prevent them from being concerned at the spread of Communist influence in Asia. Although recognising that the popular support in Vietnam was being given to the Communist Vietminh, Labour as a party did not come out against the South-east Asia Treaty Organisation, which extended protective cover to the Associated State of Vietnam, the creation of the Vietminh's opponents. The Laotian crisis of 1959, which came about during Labour's term of office, showed that the party, however, regarded SEATO as an instrument for dealing with clear, overt aggression within a United Nations context, and not as a body to legitimise military intervention against an internal Communist-led rebellion.

The Labour Party acquiesced in the sending of New Zealand troops to Malaya in 1955 on the grounds that the country had to stand by her Commonwealth obligations, and that the troops were a necessary deterrent to overt aggression. In the Commonwealth context, the party had no objection to the troops being used on internal security duties. In the Malayan case, the suppression of the insurgency was regarded initially as advancing the conditions necessary for the grant of self-rule, and later as the legitimate preservation of democratic government in Malaya. Behind these rationalisations, however, was a belief that New Zealand had a direct security interest in a non-Communist Malaya. The interest was stronger in Malaya than in Indo-China because in Malaya-Singapore were the bases of British military power in the Far East - a power that New Zealand needed.

CHAPTER 10

NEW ZEALAND, MALAYSIA AND CONFRONTATION 1961-65: BRITAIN VERSUS AUSTRALIA IN NEW ZEALAND POLICY

Introduction

In 1955 New Zealand had become involved in the defence of Malaya primarily because the government felt that the country had an obligation to help Britain in her global defence role, although there was also an appreciation that New Zealand's own strategic interests were directly involved. The Confrontation crisis consequent upon the formation of Malaysia showed New Zealand only eight years later following a policy in Malaya at variance with that of Britain, and that the era of New Zealand as the mostly unquestioning spear-carrier for Britain in her crises was finally over. New Zealand's policy, however, does not appear to have been a separate one of her own making. Rather does it seem that New Zealand adopted Australia's line towards committing troops to Borneo because Australia had constrained her from following her traditional instincts. New Zealand's declarations of solidarity with Malaysia and of willingness to put troops into Borneo were more readily forthcoming than Australia's through the period, though they were not followed up until Australia moved. On the other hand, the positive aspect of Australian policy towards Indonesia - negotiation - seems to have been adopted with more enthusiasm. Although under the Anglo-Malaysian Defence Agreement, New Zealand was committed to aiding Britain to defend Malaysia, New Zealand in the sixties did not see her role, even rhetorically, as assisting Britain in the fulfilment of her Commonwealth defence

obligations. The commitment was now on a regional basis, to Malaysia, albeit as a member of the Commonwealth.

Underneath the rhetoric of Commonwealth fraternity with Malaysia the fundamental basis of policy was strategic - the necessity to preserve the bases of British military power in South-east Asia against threat. British power in South-east Asia was seen as necessary to combat Communist advance in the area, and Indonesia was not condemned as a dangerous aggressor in her own right, but as a threat to the British presence which alone could deter 'real aggressors'. In the Malaysian crisis, New Zealand was confronted with a situation she had not anticipated - a non-Communist challenge to Malaysia. The nature of the challenge immediately introduced qualifications into New Zealand's response, supposedly predetermined by her commitment to resisting all aggression and showing solidarity with Commonwealth partners. New Zealand felt threatened only by a Communist challenge in Asia, not by Indonesian aggression. Indonesia had to be resisted in so far as it challenged the British presence, but it ought, too, to be conciliated to save it from the Communist revolution that would likely be its lot following a disastrous war with British power.

In May 1961, the Prime Minister of Malaya, Tunku Abdul Rahman, publicly proposed for the first time the merging of Malaya with the British colonies and protectorates of Singapore, Sarawak, Brunei and North Borneo, in a new Federation of Malaysia. In November of that year the British government agreed to investigate the feasibility of the concept. It was at this time that the New Zealand government

- by now a National Party one again - made its first comment on the issue.

Prime Minister and External Affairs Minister Holyoake declared that New Zealand was "sympathetic" to proposals to form Malaysia, "both from the standpoint of general stability in the area, and in the interests of the countries concerned".[1] The Prime Minister, significantly, went on to note that there had been a welcome measure of agreement between Britain and Malaya on the future use of bases in Malaya and Singapore, and he reaffirmed New Zealand's interest in any arrangements bearing on the country's capacity to discharge her treaty obligations in the South-east Asian area.

New Zealand was sympathetic to the cause of Malaysia in the first instance because of its interest in Britain's retaining control of the Singapore base. The scheme for Malaysia provided the ideal solution, as far as New Zealand was concerned, to the vital problem of the decolonisation of Singapore.

Britain's continuing military role in the Far East depended by the 'sixties on its retention of the military and naval base at Singapore. Since Communist influence was strong among Singapore's predominantly Chinese population, there was no guarantee that a future government of independent Singapore might not order Britain out, or, if that were made constitutionally impossible, might not at least make the security situation so difficult as to make the base untenable. A merger with Malaya, by putting the Singaporean Chinese in a political

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[1] *E.A.R.* November, 1961, p20

minority, would mean that the base would remain in control of reliable friendly hands. The Annual Report of the Department of External Affairs for 1963 stated:

> "The New Zealand Government is convinced that the formation of the Federation of Malaysia is the best, indeed the only, practicable solution to the problems of ensuring the security of Singapore".[2]

The government also saw Malaysia as the best vehicle for providing independence to the British Borneo territories, which, it said, could have no political or economic viability by themselves.

In March, 1962, Defence Minister Eyre flew to Singapore to confer with the visiting British Minister of Defence. It was evident from the statement he made on his return that the New Zealand government had been concerned that watertight provisions for the future of Singapore base be built into any Malaysia agreement. Eyre reiterated New Zealand's prime interest in the matter:

> "I am more than ever convinced that the continuation of Singapore as a British base is essential for the security and stability of the whole region, and for defence purposes, this includes New Zealand and Australia".[3]

The Minister went on to say:

> "..It was very heartening to me, and I'm sure it will be to all New Zealanders, that in all the discussions in which I took part, there was not the slightest suggestion that Singapore would not continue as a British base".

Eyre ended with an expression of faith in Commonwealth unity as a practical means of guaranteeing New Zealand's security.

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[2] *A.R.D.E.A.* 1963, p31

[3] *E.A.R.* March, 1962, pp15-16

> "My discussions in Singapore have reinforced my firm belief that the best defence of New Zealand and Australia as well as the best defence of the South-East Asian area depends upon the fullest possible co-ordination among the three Commonwealth countries, the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand".

In mid-1962 it had become clear that there was regional opposition to the proposed new state of Malaysia. Both the Philippines and Indonesia objected to the Borneo territories' joining Malaysia. In this situation, New Zealand's support for the concept of Malaysia was reaffirmed by the Prime Minister. In August, 1962 he said:

> "This imaginative design is, I feel, an example to the world, which in recent years has too often seen disruption and disunion instead of unity and co-operation".

Holyoake went on to say that New Zealand looked forward "with anticipation" to the closest friendship and coo-operation with the new state.[4]

> In Parliament in October, 1962, Minister of Defence Eyre said:
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> ".. most people will have viewed with satisfaction the projected establishment next year of Malaysia ... It should increase greatly, we believe, the stability of that part of South-east Asia, and indeed, should prove advantageous in every way".[5]

By 'stability', Eyre meant that the proposed new state would be a means of ensuring that its constituent parts would be less susceptible to Communist influence. The Malayans had made no secret of the fact that the incorporation of the Borneo territories was designed to offset the political influence of the Singaporean Chinese in the new Federation. Eyre went on to say:

> "As a member of the Commonwealth, we in New Zealand should be particularly concerned that the establishment of Malaysia is successful, and I believe we must be ready to come to her help as and when we can".

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[4] *A.R.D.E.A.* 1963, p32, A.J.H.R. 1963 A-1

[5] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 332, p2359, 25 October, 1962

New Zealand, then, applauded the advent of Malaysia as a means by which British military power could stay in South-east Asia in an era of self-determination. By this 'imaginative' plan, ideals could be reconciled with strategic necessity.

In the Prime Minister's introduction to the External Affairs Department's Annual Report in 1963, the ideals were well to the fore and the strategic interest not mentioned. He described the Malaysian concept again as "desirable and imaginative", a plan whereby racial animosities could be allayed, economic opportunities created, and foundations of political and social stability extended. Because of this, the Prime Minister greatly regretted the opposition to Malaysia offered by the governments of Indonesia and the Philippines.

> "I am convinced that there is no substance in suggestions that Malaysia will provide a centre of hostility to neighbouring countries, and I earnestly trust that deliberate efforts to prevent or impair formation of the new State will be abandoned".[6]

In April, 1963, Indonesia's hostility to Malaysia led to border incidents in Borneo. New Zealand was quick off the mark in warning that it would respond to any aggression against the new state. In May, 1963 - four months before Malaysia came into being - Defence Minister Eyre declared:

> "While our association with the Defence Agreement creates no formal treaty obligation, the New Zealand Government would deal promptly with any request for assistance in the event of aggression against the area. In doing so, it would be conscious of the vital importance of the security of Malaya to New Zealand itself and our long tradition of assisting friendly countries that are the victims of aggression".[7]

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[6] *A.R.D.E.A.* 1963, p5, A.J.H.R. 1963 A-1

[7] *E.A.R.* May, 1963, p32

Eyre noted that talks between Britain and Malaya on the final arrangements for Malaysia, "which will presumably include defence", would take place shortly, and that New Zealand would then be able to give formal consideration to its position in the light of agreement reached.

> "There is no reason to expect that there will be any significant change in our position".

Prime Minister Holyoake stated in the House on July 30 that the new Federation appeared to the New Zealand government to be a "constructive contribution to the security and stability of South-east Asia, and will have this government's fullest support". This support was to include the transference of the provisions of the 1959 defence agreement to the territories of Malaysia.

> "The Government expects to continue to maintain forces in the federation and to be associated with the modified agreement just as we have up till now been associated with the original agreement".[8]

The Labour Opposition had showed itself as eager to support Malaysia as the government. The new Leader of the Opposition, A.H. Nordmeyer, who had taken over from Nash in January, 1963, said in early July:

> "What the Prime Minister has said about the concept of Malaysia we wholeheartedly support. We believe that this ideal is deserving of support. We believe the Federation will make for a stronger group of nations in the area".[9]

Nash had gone further:

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[8] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 335, p902, 30 July, 1963

[9] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 335, pp408-409, 9 July, 1963

> "I hope our obligation in connection with the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve, although not necessarily written into a treaty, will be continued to Malaysia in the same way it has been to Malaya".[10]

On September 14, the Secretary-General of the United Nations reported that there was no doubt about the wishes of a sizeable majority of the people of Borneo to join the Federation of Malaysia. This report put the seal of United Nations approval on the Malaysia project. In a statement the next day, Prime Minister Holyoake welcomed the Secretary-General's finding, and observed that it opened the way for a full and unqualified acceptance of Malaysia by all concerned.[11]

Speaking to the House of Representatives on September 17, Holyoake stated that New Zealand's interest in the welfare, defence and development of Malaysia was as "compelling" as it had been for the Federation of Malaya.

> "Our association with the defence agreement is being adjusted to conform with the new boundaries.."[12]

The exchange of Letters of Association with the revised Anglo-Malayan Defence Agreement was completed the next day, and the Prime Minister made a further statement on Malaysia two days later. He pointed out that New Zealand was not legally committed to Malaysia, but said that Malaysia's survival was so crucial to New Zealand's security that this country could not afford to be indifferent to Malaysia's fate.

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[10] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 335, p420, 9 July, 1963

[11] *E.A.R.* September, 1963, p18

[12] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 336, p1923, 17 September, 1963

> "Members will note ... that [the letters] impose no legal obligation on New Zealand to maintain forces in Malaysia or to follow specific courses of action for its external - I repeat, external - defence. New Zealand has, nevertheless, more than once emphasised the importance of the peace and security of Malaysia - and other governments have also done so - to our own defence and welfare".[13]

Any power that could successfully threaten Malaysia's security was thus regarded as a threat to New Zealand.

The Prime Minister went on to make clear the government's likely response to any attack on Malaysia.

> "As a Commonwealth country, firmly linked in so many ways with Malaysia, New Zealand has always given cause, I think, to believe that she would not stand idly aside in the event of an armed attack on Malaysia. This reflects the quality of the relationship between our two countries. In the event of any armed threat against Malaysia, the New Zealand Government would promptly consult with the Malaysian and other Commonwealth Governments concerned on any measures that might be taken".

Holyoake had stressed the Commonwealth link as the motivating factor behind New Zealand's solidarity with Malaysia, but he ended his statement with a reference to New Zealand's strategic interest in Malaysia.

> "In considering .. what steps might be necessary, including the possible employment of New Zealand forces in the area, the New Zealand government would have fully in mind the importance of the security of Malaysia to New Zealand's own security".[14]

Holyoake could only have been referring to the security of Malaysia as a base for British power in the region, since in purely geographical terms, the defence of Malaysia against a southern enemy made no strategic sense for New Zealand. As the new Leader of the Opposition, Nordmeyer, had pointed out in 1955, enemy control of

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[13] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 336, p2015, 20 September, 1963

[14] Ibid.

Indonesia made defence of the Malayan peninsula irrelevant to New Zealand. Malaya's geographic importance had always been the fact that it was a jumping off spot for the invasion of Indonesia and thence Australia.

Holyoake's whole statement was so strong that, according to an anonymous External Affairs Department officer quoted by Caird, it had almost the status of a treaty guarantee.[15]

New Zealand's pledge of support had followed almost immediately on a declaration by the British government that it would defend Malaysia. Australia's declaration along similar lines did not come until five days after the New Zealand statement.

The question of Malaysian defence did not figure in the general election campaign of November, 1963, at which the National government was returned with minimal loss of support.

Indonesian pressure on the new Malaysian Federation began to escalate in the last months of the year, with the sending of guerillas into Malaysia's Borneo territories. New Zealand's response was to give more assurances to Malaysia. The Prime Minister's review of the international situation on the last day of 1963 included them.

> "New Zealand has a natural anxiety to see that there is no further deterioration in the situation; it has, however, left no doubt of its attitude towards Malaysia. New Zealand already enjoys the closest relations with Malaysia. It is a stable and progressive member of the Commonwealth; as such it deserves, and will have, New Zealand's full support".[16]

During December and early January, there were press reports in both Britain and Australia that the British were very anxious to make

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[15] Caird, Op. Cit. p108

[16] *E.A.R.* December, 1963, p25

use of the Australian and New Zealand units of the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve on the Borneo border against Indonesian infiltrators. Early in January, 1964, the political writer of the Melbourne *Sun-News Pictorial* claimed that Britain was putting strong pressure on Malaysia to ask for Australian troops, and implied that it was not the first occasion that the United Kingdom had done so.[17] An article in the *Economist* at the same time, claimed that the British government had been urging Australian Prime Minister Menzies to put Australian troops into Borneo ever since the Australian government had been returned to office in the November 1963 elections.[18]

Officially, however, the British government maintained that it was not its place to ask for troops: it was Malaysia's. It would make no comment on whether or not it was nudging Malaysia to ask. On December 5, 1963, in the House of Commons, the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, Duncan Sandys, was asked by a Conservative Party Member of Parliament whether he would give "further encouragement" to other Commonwealth countries to take part in the defence of Malaysia. Sandys replied:

> "I imagine that my honourable friend has in mind Australia and New Zealand in particular. Both these countries have expressed their full support for Malaysia in unmistakable terms. Their active participation in defence operations is, of course, a matter for decision between the Australian and New Zealand Governments and the Government of Malaysia".[19]

Asked two weeks later what approaches he had made to the governments of Australia and New Zealand to provide military forces for Sarawak and Sabah, and what had been the results of the approaches,

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[17] *O.D.T.* January 4, 1964, p3 (N.Z.P.A. - Melbourne)

[18] *Economist*, January 4, 1964, p4

[19] *House of Commons Debates* Volume 685, No. 18, Column 1335, 5 December, 1963

Sandys merely said that he had nothing to add to his answer of December 5.[20]

A noted Australian academic specialising in defence questions, however, states that both Australia and New Zealand resisted British pressure to move combat troops to Borneo.[21]

Britain wanted Commonwealth help in Borneo because crises in Cyprus and Aden on top of the necessity of keeping up troop strength in Germany were straining the army's resources, the New Zealand Press Association reported from London.[22]

On January 6, however, Malaysia's Prime Minister eased the pressure on the ANZAC countries by stating that he did not plan to seek Australian and New Zealand military help unless open war broke out.[23] When Britain's Defence Minister, Peter Thorneycroft, arrived in Malaysia on January 7, he said that Britain had adequate forces in the Borneo territories to meet the situation. The *Economist*, however, commented that Thorneycroft's statement looked "odd" after the British government's attempts to get Australia and New Zealand to commit troops to Borneo.[24] The London *Times* observed on the same day as Thorneycroft's statement:

> "None of this can conceal the fact that British troops cannot continue for much longer to defend Malaysia without reinforcement",

and went on to say that while Britain had not officially asked Australia and New Zealand for help, she should not have to. The Commonwealth

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[20] *House of Commons Debates* Volume 686 No. 28, Written Answers to Questions, Column 251, 19 December, 1963

[21] Millar, T.B. *Australia's Defence*, p75

[22] *Waikato Times*, January 4, 1964, p1

[23] *Waikato Times*, January 6, 1964, p1 (Jesselton - N.Z.P.A.)

[24] *Economist*, January 11, 1964, p94

countries should offer it.

> "It is reasonable to expect that Britain should not have to go cap in hand to two members of the Commonwealth to seek support for another against attack".[25]

Holyoake and Menzies were in touch on the issue of involvement in Borneo,[26] and would appear to have come to agreement on the necessity for holding off, even though New Zealand's interest in avoiding conflict with Indonesia was not as compelling as Australia's. The logic of geography made Australia naturally anxious to avoid conflict with its larger neighbour. Since 1962, Australia and Indonesia had shared a border in New Guinea, and there was the possibility of repercussions in Papua of any long-term war with Indonesia. New Zealand could appreciate this fear, since under the ANZUS Treaty, it could find itself involved in any fighting in Papua.

Apart from its interest in avoiding conflict with Indonesia, New Zealand's major concern in making its decision was almost certainly its relationships with Australia and the United States. Britain's 1961 announcement that it intended to seek membership of the European Economic Community gave New Zealand an interest in the short term in retaining British goodwill to ensure safeguards for the access of New Zealand produce to the British market, but it also pointed the way to strengthened relationships with Australia and the United States in both the defence and trade fields. Britain's move to join Europe was the harbinger of eventual withdrawal from South-east Asia, and New Zealand

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[25] Quoted by J.D.B. Miller, "Problems of Australian Foreign Policy July-December 1963", p14, in *Australian Journal of Politics and History* vol. X No. 1, April, 1964

[26] *Waikato Times*, January 9, 1964, p1

had been aware of this trend in British thinking since the initial consultations over Malaysia.[27] In 1963, New Zealand had initiated disucssions with Australia for a Free Trade Agreement, designed to find places for more New Zealand exports in the Australian market. In this matter, Australian goodwill was needed. A New Zealand decision to respond to a British request for aid unilaterally would have been embarrassing to Australia, which had the same commitment to Malaysia.

The American government was anxious that the war not be escalated, for two reasons. First, the State Department wished to avoid the increase of Communist influence in Indonesia, and was concerned that war could push Sukarno into the power of the Communist Party of Indonesia, or lead to his replacement by it.[28] Second, the United States feared being drawn into an escalated conflict at a time when it was becoming increasingly involved in the anti-communist war in South Vietnam. A Congressional study mission to South-east Asia in late 1963 expressed its concern that the United States could be drawn into an escalated war through the ANZUS Treaty.[29] The United States thus had an interest in seeing that Australian and New Zealand troops did not enter the war before it was absolutely necessary.

The United States was anxious, in early January, to promote a negotiated solution to the problem, something that the British government no longer believed possible or even desirable.[30] On January 13,

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[27] Brown, B. *New Zealand Foreign Policy in Retrospect*, p32

[28] Leifer, M. "Anglo-American Differences over Malaysia", in *World Today*, April, 1964, p161

[29] Reese, T.R. *Australia, New Zealand and the United States*, p220

[30] Mackie, J.A.C. *Konfrontasi*, p223; also, Greenwood, G. "Australian Foreign Policy in Action", p101 in Greenwood and Harper (eds.) *Australia in World Affairs 1961-65*

it was announced in Washington that the American Attorney-General, Robert Kennedy, would hold talks with President Sukarno in Tokyo in the later part of the month.

Apart from its own reluctance to get involved in a war with Indonesia, the Australian government was motivated by a determination not to move ahead of American policy, and not to move without American backing. New Zealand, according to J.D.B. Miller, was of a similar mind.

> "It was an axiom with both Australia and New Zealand that no decisive military step should be taken without the acquiescence and, if possible, the guaranteed support of the United States. Some time elapsed before the two governments were satisfied that the American guarantee under ANZUS might be applied to conflict in Borneo if the situation there deteriorated. Until then, *and until the United States was no longer trying to persuade Indonesia by diplomatic pressure*, it was not politic to send their troops to fight Indonesians".[31]

At least one member of the New Zealand Cabinet was in favour of a more positive effort in Malaysia by New Zealand. On January 11, the Minister of Defence, Eyre, said that he believed that New Zealand

> "could and should do more to help Malaysia in its border struggle with Indonesia".

New Zealand had its head in the sand and its tail in the air over Indonesian threats, he said, and pointed out that the security and peaceful development of South-east Asia were of much greater concern to New Zealand and Australia than to the people of Britain.

> "It's about time that we pulled our heads out of the sand and understood the realities of the situation".[32]

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[31] Miller, J.D.B. *Survey of Commonwealth Affairs - Problems of Expansion and Attrition 1953-1969* pp93-94, emphasis added.

[32] *Waikato Times*, January 11, 1964, p5

Eyre said that it was possible that New Zealand and Australia could reinforce their garrison in Malaya, but that this suggestion had not yet been examined officially.

The official Australian statement on further aid to Malaysia was made by Menzies on January 16. The Prime Minister said that the government's military advisers had thoroughly examined the military situation, and that after considering their assessment the Australian government still concluded that there was no immediate need for further Australian assistance. Menzies also stated definitely that Australia's assessment was shared by Malaysian and British authorities.

In a very defensive corollary, the Australian Prime Minister pointed out that Malaysia's defence involved peninsular Malaya as well as Sabah and Sarawak and that Australian troops were already available for this task. The glaringly obvious fact, however, was that it was Sabah and Sarawak that were threatened and in need of defence. The Australian government's real reason for holding back was not its military assessment but its political one.

> "The Government believes that there has been and is considerable scope in the diplomatic field to try to end border incidents and to maintain peace in the area",[33]

Menzies said.

It was the day after Menzies made his statement that Australians would not be going to Borneo that Holyoake announced that New Zealand forces also would not be going to Borneo.

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[33] *Current Notes on International Affairs*, January, 1964, pp61-62

> "It is our assessment, *which appears to be accepted by our allies*, that the existing level of Malaysian and British forces in Sarawak and Sabah is fully capable of containing the present scale of military activity, and the introduction of our ground forces into the Borneo States for active operations has not, therefore, been necessary".[34]

The Prime Minister went on to say that if circumstances changed, then New Zealand would do all that was necessary.

It was a very significant development in New Zealand's foreign policy in the Malayan region that the Prime Minister had said that the decision had been based on New Zealand's own assessment of the military situation and not on Britain's. In 1955 and again in 1957, the New Zealand government had acknowledged publicly that it was responding to British assessments of British needs in the area. Although the government had proclaimed that it was acting on its own assessment, the timing of the announcement indicated that New Zealand's assessment was heavily influenced by Australia's. The Prime Minister did not claim, as Menzies had, that New Zealand's other allies - presumably Britain and Malaysia - agreed with New Zealand's assessment: merely that they appeared to accept it. By emphasising that the assessment has been a New Zealand one, Holyoake left open the question of whether the British assessment differed from it. New Zealand was acting now not so much in defence of Commonwealth interests, as in defence of Australia's and her own. Technically, under the Anglo-Malaysian Defence Treaty she was supposed to act as an adjunct to British power in defence of Commonwealth interests, but now when Britain wanted to use that power, New Zealand was reluctant to commit it. The New Zealand government preferred Britain - which had less

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[34] *External Affairs Review*, January, 1964, p20

to lose - to defend Malaysia from Indonesia, rather than to become unnecessarily involved itself. Caird goes as far as to claim that a vital facet of New Zealand's foreign policy in South-east Asia at this time was to "drag the chain" on commitments there so as to keep British power in the area.[35]

While a New Zealand contribution to the Borneo front may not have been strictly necessary in terms of the local military situation, it was highly desirable in British eyes in terms of Britain's overall global military situation. What was necessary to deal with Indonesia was being adequately provided in Borneo by Britain, but at a price: - the stretching of British reserves. A decade before, the duty of New Zealand to help pay that price had been widely trumpeted as a justification for a New Zealand commitment. New Zealand's concept of the extent of that duty now seemed limited; the troops remained to defend peninsular Malaya, but the old role of unquestioning spear carrier for Britain in her global role seemed to have gone. The interest in relieving British defence burdens was now less than that in co-operating with Australia, and, seemingly, in preserving good relations with Indonesia.

There was a considerable disparity between the firm declarations of support for Malaysia and the Commonwealth in September, 1963, and the cautious policy actually followed in January, 1964. There could have been no greater declaration of support for Malaysia than the transfer of New Zealand troops to Borneo. Several explanations present themselves for the caution. The rhetoric of September could have been

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[35] Caird, Op. Cit. p118

meant for deterrence only and not as an expression of concrete policy; or the government could have believed that military aid was not necessary; or New Zealand was being constrained by Australia. The last seems most likely.

The fact that both Britain and Malaysia were seeking Australasian help at this time was revealed at the end of the month by the announcement in New Zealand of the implementation of a compromise plan for the use of New Zealand troops. This plan enabled New Zealand and Australia to aid Malaysia without confronting Indonesia. Early in January, the Canberra correspondent of the Melbourne *Sun* had reported that Australasian troops might take over internal security duties in the Malay peninsula again, so that more Malaysian troops could concentrate in Borneo. Commonwealth troops had been off internal security duties since the end of the state of emergency in Malaya in 1960, but the *Sun* reported that Australia and New Zealand considered this more satisfactory than committing their troops to active service along the Indonesia border.[36] Sure enough, at the end of January it was announced that New Zealand had agreed to the employment of the New Zealand battalion stationed at Malacca against terrorists in northern Malaya, so as to assist the Malaysian government in

> "preparing and making available additional Malaysian forces which may be required to deal with the security problems in the Borneo States".[37]

It seemed, then, that additional troops in Borneo *were* needed, and New Zealand troops were to be employed on internal security duties so

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[36] *Waikato Times* January 9, 1964, p1 (N.Z.P.A. - Melbourne)

[37] *E.A.R.* January 1964, p21 (29 January, 1964)

that Malaysia could provide them. Yet the declared purpose of the New Zealand force in Malaysia was to defend that country from external attack and logically it should have been New Zealand forces that were on stand-by for Borneo. Internal security duties were much more properly the function of Malaysian troops.

At the same time that these decisions were being taken, the New Zealand Prime Minister had written a note to Indonesia's Foreign Minister, Dr Subandrio. In this note, Holyoake stated that the reason for the New Zealand government's reluctance to commit troops to Borneo was its concern for the effect it could have on relations between Indonesia and New Zealand.

It is more likely that New Zealand's concern for relations with Indonesia - established diplomatically only in 1960 - was secondary to her desire to co-operate with Australia.

The note read:

> "I feel I should let you know with what deep concern the New Zealand Government and people have viewed recent developments in the Borneo States. We are most anxious to maintain friendly relations with Indonesia, a country which is destined to play such an important part in the immediate and long-term future of this area of the world in which we live. I should personally deeply regret it if relations between us ... were now to be impaired as a result of the policy of confrontation against Malaysia..
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> ... Up to the present we have not felt it necessary to commit forces to operations in the Borneo States alongside Malaysian and British units. This is a step we have been most reluctant to take because we realise the effect that it could have upon relations between Indonesia and New Zealand. It is, nevertheless, a step from which we would not shrink if a further serious deterioration in the situation in the Borneo States should [develop]".[38]

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[38] *E.A.R.* April, 1964, p24

The government, while demurring at sending troops to Borneo, was determined to aid Malaysia in other ways. The government agreed that the Prime Minister should go to Malaysia to discuss with the Malaysian government a programme of defence aid that would include the secondment of New Zealand armed forces personnel to the Malaysian forces, the training of Malaysian servicemen in New Zealand, and the outright gift of equipment and munitions.[39]

In April, 1964, by releasing his letter to Subandrio to the press Holyoake publicly pledged for the first time that New Zealand troops would go to Borneo if the situation there worsened. In Kuala Lumpur he reiterated that if the situation deteriorated as a result of military aggression then New Zealand would be prepared to join with the Commonwealth partners in making New Zealand forces available.[40]

In making this pledge, New Zealand policy edged slightly ahead of Australia's. The Australian government made no declaration with regard to Borneo, although it, too, was quietly increasing its defence aid to Malaysia. In April, the Australians decided to send a detachment of engineers to Borneo.[41]

After discussions on defence aid with the Malaysians in April, New Zealand's Prime Minister continued the dual-approach policy, which had been initiated in January with the letter to Subandrio, by paying a surprise visit to Djakarta. At the conclusion of the short visit, Holyoake said that Indonesia was now very clear as to New Zealand's position on Confrontation. He announced, too, that he had

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[39] *A.R.D.E.A.* 1964, p31, A.J.H.R. 1964 A-1

[40] *E.A.R.* April, 1964, p29

[41] Millar, T.B. 'Australian Defence 1945-1965' p289 in Greenwood and Harper (eds.) *'Australia in World Affairs 1961-65'*

invited President Sukarno to visit New Zealand.[42]

The policy of simultaneously negotiating with Indonesia while gradually increasing support for Malaysia was basically the same as Australia's, although New Zealand had shown a tendency to be more quickly off the mark in registering support of Malaysia. New Zealand did not have the same conflicting interests to balance as Australia - a traditional neighbourly relationship with Indonesia with the equally traditional Commonwealth commitment - but New Zealand took the Australian course anyway. New Zealand's relationship with Indonesia could never claim the same attention from the government that the relationship with Malaysia could. New Zealand did, however, have an interest in normalising relations with Indonesia because Indonesia was seen as a potential ally rather than a natural enemy. Any non-Communist state in the region, and particularly one in Indonesia's geographic position, should not be made an enemy.

The annual report of the Department of External Affairs for 1964 acknowledged that the Indonesian challenge had posed

> "special ... problems for New Zealand... In the new situation involving Malaysia, .. there was no ready identity with the familiar and ever-present problem of Communist expansion".[43]

It was the strategic demands of that problem in the first instance that forced New Zealand to be closely involved with the new situation involving Indonesia:

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[42] *Christchurch Press* April 20, 1964, quoted by Caird p111

[43] *A.R.D.E.A.* 1964 p30

> ".. there was a close and potentially substantial threat to the very bases (in peninsular Malaysia and Singapore) on which the Commonwealth partners' ability to maintain their peaceful and stabilising influence in the area depended".[44]

In order to defend the bases which were necessary to aid anti-Communist forces in South-east Asia, Malaysia had to be defended against Indonesia. There was no mention in this assessment of the necessity to resist aggression for its own sake, or of upholding the principle of self-determination, or even of Commonwealth solidarity. Indonesia had to be resisted because it was threatening the base of British military power in Asia.

The primary necessity of defending the bases was to be again stressed in the following year's departmental report.

> "The purpose of the Strategic Reserve is to assist in the defence of South-East Asia, but a first task must be to preserve the security of its base area",

it said.[45] That report went on to make it clear that Malaysia's Commonwealth membership was a secondary consideration in New Zealand's taking its part in the quarrel with Indonesia.

> "In this case there was an additional consideration: Malaysia, as a fellow member of the Commonwealth, has a strong claim on other members for assistance in the event of aggression. It was inevitable, therefore, that New Zealand forces should become increasingly associated with Malaysia's defence as Confrontation intensified".

The fact that the threat to the bases had come from a country with which New Zealand was anxious to have friendly relations, however, had made the problem difficult, the department admitted.

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[44] *A.R.D.E.A.* 1964, p30, A.J.H.R. 1964 A-1

[45] *A.R.D.E.A.* 1965, p34, A.J.H.R. 1965 A-1

> "The response to Indonesian pressure from the supporters of Malaysia ... had to be firm enough to preserve Malaysia's integrity without provoking a disastrous intensification of the conflict".[46]

An intensification of the conflict held the risk of defeats for the Indonesians serious enough to break up the regime and allow the powerful Communist Party to come to power. If that happened, Indonesia could become a threat to Australia and New Zealand in her own right. The Australians recognised an interest in preserving the existing structure in Indonesia.[47]

Although trying to dissuade Indonesia by a graduated response, New Zealand, at least, made it clear that in the last resort it would fight for Malaysia.

The department reported that

> "It has .. been the government's concern, while looking for a peaceful resolution of Indonesian hostility and Philippine misgivings towards Malaysia, to leave no room for dangerous doubt that New Zealand's support for the federation was in any way qualified".[48]

The substance of the Prime Minister's talk with Sukarno was brought out by a parliamentary question put to him in June, 1964, by a member of his own party. H.E.L. Pickering asked Holyoake whether in his discussions with Sukarno in Djakarta in April he had given "full support to Malaysia" and whether he had indicated New Zealand's willingness to assist Malaysia "in whatever manner might be necessary". The Prime Minister replied affirmatively.

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[46] *A.R.D.E.A.* 1964, p30, A.J.H.R. A-1 1964

[47] Greenwood and Harper (eds.) Op. Cit., p111

[48] *A.R.D.E.A.* 1964, p25

> "I said that New Zealand had enjoyed friendly diplomatic relations with Indonesia and wanted to see these continue, but that we also had the closest relations with Malaysia, to which we had defence obligations; and Malaysia, of course is a member of the Commonwealth. I pointed out ... that it would be tragic if the situation were to develop to the point where New Zealand and Indonesian forces came into direct conflict. I said, further, that New Zealand was determined, nevertheless, to meet its obligations to Malaysia, and I recalled my public statement that if there should be a further deterioration in the security situation in the Borneo States of Malaysia, the New Zealand battalion serving in the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve would be made available for operations in the Borneo States alongside the forces of our allies. I am therefore quite certain the Indonesian leaders understand the measure of our support for Malaysia".[49]

Members of the government in statements on the Malaysian issue always gave emphasis to Malaysia's Commonwealth membership as a motivating factor in New Zealand's actions. In August, 1964, the Minister of Defence, Eyre, told Parliament:

> "I believe .. that, as a member of the Commonwealth, we have a moral duty, apart from other duties, to assist Malaysia, especially in countering outside interference".[50]

The same month the Prime Minister gave the impression in the House that Malaysia's cause was more important than South Vietnam's to New Zealand because of Malaysia's Commonwealth membership. Holyoake said that of the two threats in South-east Asia - Communist China's in the north, and Indonesia's in the South - there was no point in asking which was the more important to New Zealand because "our first duty is to our Commonwealth ally, Malaysia".[51]

The Confrontation between Malaysia and Indonesia escalated on August 17 when Indonesian infiltrators were landed from the sea on the

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[49] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 338, p179, 19 June, 1964

[50] *N.Z.P.D.* vol.339, p1651, 27 August, 1964

[51] Ibid., p1661

Malay peninsula, extending the scope of the war from the disputed Borneo territories to the heart of the Federation itself. The landing was followed on September 2 by a dramatic dropping of Indonesian paratroops near Labis, also in peninsular Malaysia. These Indonesian actions called forth a strong reaction from the New Zealand government. Again, the reaction was in terms of Commonwealth solidarity. Holyoake declared on September 4 that New Zealand could not stand by while one of its closest friends and partners in the Commonwealth was being subjected to attack. The government, he said, was now considering what further help might be given to Malaysia, either financially, or, if needed, through the employment of New Zealand troops now stationed in Malaysia.[52] On the same day that Holyoake made this statement, the Malaysian government sought permission from New Zealand for New Zealand troops to be used in the hunt for infiltrators, and after this was agreed to, the Prime Minister made a statement to Parliament on the matter.

> "The situation in the area has .. recently become more serious as a result of the Indonesian decision to expand its activities to Malaya and Singapore".

The Prime Minister agreed that responsibility for dealing with the infiltrators lay in the first instance with the Malaysian government's own military forces, but he said that he felt sure that he was reflecting the feeling of the House and the country when he declared that if assistance was needed, New Zealand was ready to give it. The need for assistance, he pointed out, was highlighted by the unfortunately simultaneous disturbances in Singapore, which had placed a burden on Malaysia's own forces.

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[52] *E.A.R.* September, 1964, p18

> "At the request of the Malaysian Government ... I conveyed our agreement to the use of the New Zealand battalion, as did the British government to the use of a battalion of its forces ... The decision to accede to the Malaysian request was fully in accord with the objectives under which the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve is stationed in Malaysia".[53]

Finally, then, New Zealand troops were committed to action against the Indonesians, although still not in Borneo. They did this ahead of the Australians, who were not called upon by the Malaysian government. Holyoake had noted in passing that the Australian battalion was "committed on the Thai border against the Communist terrorists and was not available", implying that if it had been at the Reserve's base camp in Malacca it would have been used. This may well have been true (and indeed, Australian troops were to be used the next month, when they were back in Malacca) but it is also true that the Australian government had not matched the New Zealand government's statement of readiness to act. The Australian government's public reaction to the Indonesian landings had been non-existent.

In his statement to Parliament on September 8, Holyoake said that the government's decision to make the troops available had been made before the Malaysian request for them. The government had taken the decision after the first sea-landings had occurred - that is, after August 17.[54] The Malaysian request of September 4 was thus probably based not on the September 4 New Zealand statement, but on a prior New Zealand offer.

It would seem that in making this decision in late August, New Zealand had broken partly free from Australian-induced restraint on the ANZAC countries fighting Indonesians, and reverted New Zealand

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[53] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 339, p1940, 8 September, 1964

[54] Ibid.

policy to its traditional lines of the fullest possible support for the Commonwealth. However, New Zealand was still not prepared to step seriously out of line with Australian policy by making its battalion available for Borneo before the Australians made this step.

Australia itself moved forward in its Confrontation policy in October when more Indonesian infiltrators landed very close to the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve's base in Malacca. This time Australian troops were present at the base and the Australian government was asked for their use in mopping up operations. The government acquiesced.

After the landings, Malaysia lodged a protest with the Security Council of the United Nations at Indonesia's aggression, and the Council voted overwhelmingly to condemn the Indonesian actions. A Soviet veto prevented the Council's resolution from being adopted.

At the end of the year, New Zealand took up Malaysia's cause in the General debate in the United Nations. Once again, her support for Malaysia was more forthright than Australia's in that New Zealand's delegates did not hesitate to condemn Indonesia by name. Australia's Minister of External Affairs, Paul Hasluck, spoke in the General Debate five days before New Zealand's Justice Minister J.R. Hanan, and his only mention of Confrontation was an indirect one: he called for all members to recognise their obligation to settle disputes peacefully, but did not mention Indonesia by name.[55]

New Zealand's Minister of Justice, J.R. Hanan, devoted a part of his speech to deploring the fact that a member of the United Nations geographically close to New Zealand was violating the fundamental precepts of the United Nations Charter. Hanan said that respect for

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[55] *Current Notes on International Affairs* December, 1964, p30

National sovereignty and the territorial integrity of member states was a corner-stone of the United Nations system. The Charter laid down a code of international behaviour which New Zealand regarded as the best prescription the world had for the preservation of peace. It was therefore a matter of deep concern to New Zealand that the Charter was being "flouted, openly" by Indonesia. The Minister said that New Zealand found it disturbing that Indonesia should act as if Article Two of the Charter was an obligation that could be waived at will.

> "When we consider the principles on which the United Nations is based, there are very serious implications for all nations, particularly all smaller nations, in the policy of Confrontation".[56]

Indonesia's attack, then, was, in New Zealand's eyes, not merely an attack upon Malaysia, which was strategically important to New Zealand, but an attack on the United Nations and the principles it represented - principles that New Zealand was trying very hard to get established as ruling all conduct in foreign affairs. New Zealand not only supported Malaysia in the dispute; it condemned Indonesia's methods of achieving its objectives.

Hanan called for Indonesia to withdraw her forces from Malaysian territory, saying that this call was nothing more than a call for Indonesia to "return to the observance of the obligations of the Charter".

Two days after Hanan's speech, the Indonesian representative replied to his call. He argued that Indonesian troops could not be condemned for being on Malaysian territory because Indonesia did not recognise Malaysia. A demand for their withdrawal was tantamount to a demand that Indonesia recognise Malaysia.

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[56] *E.A.R.* December, 1964, p40

This claim brought an intervention into the debate by New Zealand's permanent representative to the United Nations, F.H. Corner. Corner declared that the Indonesian argument that lack of recognition was a sufficient justification for hostile action was incompatible with the paragraphs of the Charter which stated that disputes between nations should be settled peacefully, and that all states should refrain from the use of force against the territorial integrity and political independence of any other state. Corner expressed New Zealand's concern that what he termed Indonesia's lawless doctrine was being used by a large nation against a small one.[57]

On December 21 the Indonesian representative attacked New Zealand as a supporter of British neo-colonialism and being against self-determination. Corner's reply was in terms of small nation solidarity against large bullying nations: a theme from the 1940s. New Zealand troops were in Malaysia to "help a small Commonwealth ally of New Zealand". Corner pointed out that New Zealand was the smallest of the older members of the Commonwealth, and that Malaysia was the smallest Asian member. Malaysia, he said, was being bullied by an extremely large and potentially powerful country of 100 million people. New Zealand's aid to her in the face of this might be small, but it was a mark of the fact that one small country would stand by another.

> "New Zealand will always, I hope, come down decisively on the side of the small country which is threatened and bullied".[58]

It could be argued that New Zealand's acceptance of Australian constraint on the sending of troops to Borneo was not the mark of one small country coming down decisively in support of another.

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[57] *E.A.R.* December, 1964, p52

[58] *E.A.R.* December, 1964, p50

During the year, American relations with Indonesia had deteriorated seriously. The Johnson Administration had had no success in its attempts to negotiate a solution to Confrontation, and policy towards Indonesia began to harden. In July, the turning point was reached when Malaysian Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman came to Washington,[59] and in a joint communique with Johnson it was announced that the United States was willing to help Malaysia with its defence. In November, an American military mission had visited Kuala Lumpur to talk about Malaysian needs. From Australia's and New Zealand's point of view, American support for the policy of military resistance to Indonesia was more likely.

At the end of the year, President Sukarno withdrew Indonesia from the United Nations, and simultaneously began a build-up of military forces in Borneo. Britain, in turn, began to increase its military strength in the region.

Finally, in February, 1965, New Zealand offered its battalion for service in Borneo, and this was announced in the wake of an Australian offer.

On February 3, while Holyoake and Australian Prime Minister Menzies were in London for Churchill's funeral, the Acting Prime Minister of Australia, McEwen, announced that Australia had decided to make its infantry battalion in Malaya available for use in Borneo. When New Zealand's acting Prime Minister, J.R. Marshall, was asked to comment on McEwen's announcement, he in turn, announced that New Zealand too would give additional military assistance to Malaysia,

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[59] Mackie, J.A.C. *Konfrontasi* p223

although he did not say that this would take the form of offering the battalion for service in Borneo. Marshall said that the Cabinet had made the decision to offer further military assistance at its first meeting for the year on January 26 - before Holyoake had left for London. The offer, Marshall said, was currently under discussion by the Malaysian government.[60] On his return from Britain two days later, Prime Minister Holyoake confirmed that New Zealand troops would go to Borneo. Aside from the battalion, the services of an S.A.S. detachment had been offered, as well as the crews for two minesweepers.[61]

The Prime Minister said that the government's decision was a result of the concern it had felt during the previous weeks about the considerable build-up of Indonesian regular forces in Sumatra and Indonesian Borneo.

> "Those countries assisting Malaysia are obliged to take account of this increased military thrust and ensure that Malaysia, with its friends, is in a position to cope adequately with any increase in the number or scale of incursions. It will be recalled that the British government has recently deployed additional forces in the area".[62]

The Prime Minister said that Cabinet had made its decision on additional aid at Malaysian request, but the British Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, later said that the Borneo decision of the Commonwealth countries had been taken after consultations in London with him.[63]

Certainly Holyoake said in his February 5 statement that he and Menzies had discussed the Malaysian situation with Wilson at lunch on February 1.

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[60] *E.A.R.* February, 1965, p19

[61] *E.A.R.* February, 1965, p19

[62] Ibid., p20

[63] Millar, T.B. "*Australia's Defence*", p76

T.B. Millar says that the new British Labour Government had

> "long canvassed the idea of a greater physical contribution by Australia ... towards Malaysia"[64]

If so, then the British government must have been pressing for aid from the time it came into office in October, 1964, and it is very likely that the Malaysian request to New Zealand came as a result of British urging. The delay in New Zealand's announcement of her decision to offer additional aid may be attributed to a desire to wait upon a positive Australian response to the British-Malaysian request, or even to a necessity to lobby for that positive response. Marshall said that New Zealand's decision had been made at the January 26 Cabinet meeting; Australia's seems to have been made at a Cabinet meeting on February 3.[65] McEwen announced the decision after a Cabinet meeting. Caird says that it is "likely" that New Zealand exerted some influence on Australia to commit forces to Borneo.[66] Caird bases this likelihood on the fact that New Zealand did not have the same degree of reluctance to defend Eastern Malaysia as Australia seemd to. The New Zealand Government had made it plain several times from April, 1964, onwards that New Zealand forces would go to Borneo should they be required there. The Australian Government had never given such a definite pledge.

The commitment of troops to Borneo did not result in New Zealand's abandoning entirely the two-pronged nature of her policy towards Indonesia. In his introduction to the 1965 Annual Report of the Department of External Affairs the Prime Minister said that New Zealand

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[64] Millar, T.B. "Problems in Australian Foreign Policy, January-June, 1965", in *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, vol. XI No.3, December, 1965, p268

[65] *The Times* (London) February 3, 1965

[66] Caird, Op. Cit., p134

intended to continue training Indonesians in New Zealand under the Colombo Plan

> "as evidence of our wish to help the Indonesians in their task of national development, and as a basis upon which, in more propitious circumstances, more varied forms of aid can be resumed".

The Prime Minister went on to express his belief that Confrontation was really an aberration in the Indonesian government's policy, rather than a deep-seated national aspiration.[67]

In May, 1965, New Zealand found itself in receipt of a competing demand for military aid - from the United States for South Vietnam. In justifying the despatch of an artillery unit to Vietnam in May, Holyoake made the point that while Malaysia was still New Zealand's prior commitment, the greater danger was in South Vietnam. The artillery battery, he said, could be provided

> "without weakening in any way our military effort in Malaya [sic] which still, of course, remains our first priority".[68]

In August, 1965, Singapore seceded from the Federation of Malaysia and became an independent state - a move that took the British, Australian and New Zealand governments by surprise. The secession had been forced upon the Singapore government by the Malaysian government, which was responding to the concern felt by Malay nationalist groups about the influence of the Singaporeans on the internal policies of the Federation.[69]

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[67] *A.R.D.E.A. 1965, p4* A.J.H.R. 1965 A-1

[68] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 342, p8, 28 May, 1965

[69] Greenwood, G. "Australian Foreign Policy in Action", p106 in Greenwood and Harper (eds.) "*Australia in World Affairs 1961-65*"

With Singapore gone, the major reason for defending the concept of Malaysia ceased to exist. However, the New Zealand government, along with those of Britain and Australia, declared that it would continue to support the aspirations of the people of Malaysia.[70] The Anglo-Malaysian Treaty was to continue to apply to both Singapore and Malaysia in the future.

In October, 1965, Indonesia's Confrontation policy was dealt a fatal blow by an internal upheaval in that country which led to the Indonesian's army taking power away from Sukarno. In the next six months, Confrontation was quietly phased out, to be ended formally in August, 1966.

Conclusion

In the period of Confrontation, New Zealand's policy in South-east Asia followed more closely the policy of Australia than that of Britain. This was by no means the first time that this had happened, but the divergence from Britain was greater than during the Indo-China crisis, and it occurred in a British sphere of influence. The dual policy towards Indonesia, as Caird says, was developed by Australia and adopted by New Zealand, but not, it seems, to the same extent. While concerned to preserve relations with a non-Communist Indonesia because the latter was seen as no threat in itself to New Zealand, New Zealand could not be as concerned as Australia with preserving those relations. New Zealand's early public declarations of her

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[70] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 343, p1759-60, 10 August, 1965

willingness to send troops to Borneo contrasted with Australian reticence on the issue. New Zealand was more willing to castigate Indonesia in public, as her response to the August, 1964 invasion of Malaya and her performance in the United Nations in December bear witness.

Caird postulates that New Zealand's policy was somewhere between that of Australia and Britain, counterbalancing the caution of the one while not being eager to commit forces as the other would wish. After hypothesising a middle position, Caird goes on to say that New Zealand was shackled to the Australian viewpoint until early 1965, since it was "unthinkable that New Zealand should deploy troops to the Borneo territories without Australia making a similar move".[71] New Zealand's being shackled to Australian policy seems inconsistent with its having a middle position. It implies that New Zealand's preference was for the British position, but that the government was forced to follow the Australian line as long as the Australians persisted in it. If this was so, then the dual policy towards Indonesia sprang less from a shared identity of outlook with Australia than deference to Australian views.

The fact is that strong New Zealand support for Malaysia, as evidenced by the statement of September 20, 1963, and the declared interest in securing the base area of the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve, was not translated into military involvement in Borneo in January, 1964, despite British desire that it should be. It seems probable that Australian unwillingness to be militarily involved with Indonesia was the major influence in this decision, since it is

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[71] Caird, Op. Cit., p134

unlikely that New Zealand's concern for its weak relationship with Indonesia would have otherwise prevailed over British needs. New Zealand policy announcements in 1964 showed a desire to give full support for Malaysia, but New Zealand did not move fundamentally beyond the Australian position.

Confrontation saw many strands of New Zealand's foreign policy emphasised. The government's strategic concern for the preservation of British military power in South-east Asia so as to combat Communist aggression and subversion was overlain by her sense of Commonwealth solidarity with Malaysia, her moral horror at acts of aggression and her empathy with small nations in general when bullied by large ones. New elements were also present. There were no public expressions of New Zealand's having to do her military bit by Britain. New Zealand apparently no longer saw her function as aiding Britain in her global role. There was also the influence of Australia pitted to some degree against the traditional impulses. This proved powerful enough in 1964 to counter the latter.

CHAPTER 11

NEW ZEALAND AND THE VIETNAM WAR, THE RELUCTANT ALLY

Introduction

New Zealand's military commitment to South Vietnam in the 1960s was the ultimate expression of its loyalty to the protector syndrome, and may be compared with the uneasy solidarity with Britain in the Suez crisis. As the decade had changed, so had the loyalty shifted from one protector to another. New Zealand was reluctant to be involved militarily in South Vietnam, as it had been in 1954 and again in 1959, and for related reasons: that the domestic situation in Vietnam was such that a military solution was not practicable and that direct Western involvement could only worsen the situation. Nevertheless, New Zealand was under indirect pressure by 1965 from its two closest allies - the United States and Australia - to contribute to the common effort, and the need to preserve the alliance, as always, came before any reservations about alliance policy (see China chapters). In 1954 and 1959, New Zealand's attitude had been supported by Australia and Britain, and these allies had enabled New Zealand to resist American wishes respectably. As shown by the Confrontation crisis, Britain's attitude had ceased to be as important for New Zealand in the nineteen-sixties as Australia's, so that when Australia's attitude swung closer to the American approach over Vietnam New Zealand felt that it had no choice but to fall in line.

New Zealand's military aid to South Vietnam remained at the token level, even compared with Australia's or its own Korean War effort, and was at decided variance with its rhetorical level, which was high

in terms of small nation solidarity against an aggressor. Throughout the course of the war, New Zealand promoted a negotiated settlement with more vigour than Australia.

When the Geneva Agreement of July 20, 1954 ended the first Indo-China War, New Zealand issued a declaration that it would regard a violation of that settlement as a threat to the security of South-east Asia and a danger to international peace generally.

It was during the time of the 1957-60 Labour government that the first difficulties appeared, and they were confined to Laos. It was not until the beginning of the Second National government's term in office that the Geneva settlement with regard to South Vietnam began to appear to be seriously threatened.

One of the first New Zealand comments on the guerilla war in South Vietnam and its significance for New Zealand came in November, 1961, on the occasion of the government's offering monetary assistance for the relief of flood victims. Prime Minister Holyoake said that New Zealand was distressed to learn of the natural disaster, which came at a time when South Vietnam was already suffering from the social and economic disruption caused by the operation of Communist guerilla bands "from North Vietnam". The future of South Vietnam and its brave people was of deep concern to New Zealand, the Prime Minister stated:

> "Anything we can do to help them ... is in our own interests as well as theirs".[1]

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[1] *E.A.R.* November, 1961, p17

Vietnam was thus declared a New Zealand interest. That same month, the United States concluded a military assistance agreement with South Vietnam, in technical violation of the Geneva Accords.

Reese says that by the beginning of 1962 the United States was moving to associate New Zealand and Australia with the anti-Communist struggle in South Vietnam.[2] In May, 1962 the first ANZUS Council in two years was held, and for the first time at Canberra. The final communique admitted that there had been "more than usually extensive discussionson matters of common interest". It went on to say that the participating Ministers "noted in particular" the resolution with which the Government of South Vietnam was defending itself against insurgency formented and directed by North Vietnam and expressed their full support of measures to assist that government combat that threat.[3] American Secretary of State Rusk, according to reports, requested assistance from the other two to help make the large defence budget more palatable at home.[4] In a public speech he said that Australians and New Zealanders were helping in Vietnam in significant and growing ways, but that there was "more for us all to do in that situation".[5]

Holyoake was evidently happy to agree. In a statement in May New Zealand offered to send a technical mission to South Vietnam while Australia promised to send a team of army instructors. In his introduction to the 1962 Annual Report of the Department of External Affairs, The Prime Minister said:

> "It is clear ... that the struggle in South Vietnam will be long, tense and bitter; accordingly, I think it necessary

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[2] Reese, T.R. *Australia, New Zealand and the United States* p303

[3] *E.A.R.* May, 1962, p38

[4] Reese, Op. Cit. p303

[5] Ibid., pp303-304

> that countries friendly to Vietnam consider urgently ways in which they might help the Republic in meeting its difficulties. New Zealand should, I think, examine the possibility of further assistance under the Colombo Plan".[6]

The government's first instincts were for a non-military approach, and the offer materialised as a surgical team.

All the Ministers at the ANZUS meeting had reaffirmed the intentions of their governments to "honour to the full their individual and collective obligations under the SEATO Treaty".[7] In these words, New Zealand and Australia accepted the new American position that the signatories of the Manila Treaty had individual obligations to the countries covered by it, as well as collective ones. The way was now open for some SEATO countries to take military action without the approval of all. The unanimous clause had meant that brakes were placed on the more impulsive members. This statement was an immediate prelude to the commitment of troops to Thailand by most of the SEATO allies.

The breakdown of the cease-fire between rightist, neutralist and Communist forces in Laos, and the subsequent advance of the Communist forces, was the occasion for a Thai call for help and the swift despatch of American troops to the Thai border. On May 16, the Prime Minister announced that the situation was a matter of "profound concern" for New Zealand and that the government fully supported the precautionary measures which President Kennedy had taken.[8] The New Zealand government was fully conscious of its own responsibilities and obligations and was consulting urgently with its allies on the ways and means by which it could join with them in remedying the situation. The

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[6] *A.R.D.E.A.* 1962, p6 A.J.H.R. 1962 A-1

[7] *E.A.R.* May, 1962, p38

[8] *E.A.R.* May, 1962, p25

next day Holyoake said that New Zealand was considering sending a small contingent to Thailand in support of the action taken by the Americans. It was most important, he thought, that New Zealand should join her allies in demonstrating solidarity with Thailand.[9] The Prime Minister did not say why it was important, but it seemed evident that New Zealand felt it ought to be seen to be a worthy ally. The government seemed afraid of being left behind. It was eager to spur on American action on behalf of South-east Asian countries.

If the government were to send troops to a non-British country without New Zealand's being at war, it would be doing it in a traditional context. The British and Australian governments were prepared to send contingents, too. When, five days later, Holyoake announced that New Zealand was offering to send a military force to Thailand, he said it would provide visible proof that New Zealand was fully prepared to honour its obligations under the Manila Treaty to preserve peace and security in South-east Asia.[10] The Prime Minister did not say to whom the proof was being made. Obviously it was more important to convince the Americans than the Pathet Lao, as the Communist Laotians were called. Holyoake wanted to prove that Collective Defence had meaning. He said that all nations of that part of the world had to support each other militarily and economically if they were to withstand aggression and the threat of aggression. Despite New Zealand's eagerness to stand up and be counted, the Prime Minister admitted that the troops of the Special Air Service were a token force, and were for deterrence only.

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[9] *E.A.R.* May, 1962, p25

[10] *E.A.R.* May, 1962, p27

The next month, June, a special report of the Geneva Conference's International Control Commission on Vietnam was released in London. It found that both Vietnams had violated the agreement, but that South Vietnam's, in regard to forming an alliance with the United States, were consequent on North Vietnam's in regard to supporting guerillas in the South.

The New Zealand Prime Minister hailed the report as

> "an important landmark in the international consideration which has been given to the problem of Vietnam ... The recognition by an impartial authority of North Vietnam's responsibility in the terrorist campaign in the South should appreciably strengthen the position of South Vietnam and its allies".[11]

In September, 1962, New Zealand and the Republic of Vietnam established full diplomatic relations. New Zealand had recognised the Republic's predecessor in 1950, but, as Acting Minister of External Affairs Seath said, the establishment of full relations would allow the two governments to explore more fully opportunities for co-operation.

> "I do not need to emphasise that New Zealand feels a strong sympathy for the government and people of South Vietnam in their struggle to preserve the independence and integrity of their country and is anxious to give them moral and practical assistance in overcoming their present difficulties".

Seath said.[12]

Late in the year, New Zealand was visited by the South Vietnamese Foreign Minister, who indicated that his government would greatly appreciate a New Zealand military contribution along the lines of Australia's [an army training team].[13] The plea was made again by the South Vietnamese Ambassador when he visited New Zealand from Australia

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[11] *E.A.R.* June, 1962, p26

[12] *E.A.R.* September, 1962, p31-32

[13] *E.A.R.* June, 1963, p27

in late May, 1963. As Holyoake said in June, New Zealand had merely "kept the possibility of meeting this request under review". Perhaps a rather tepid response from a country to an ally supposedly under attack, but 1963 was an election year.

The decision to grant the request seems to have been made only in the wake of the June, 1963 ANZUS Council meeting. In the final communique, on the subject of aid to Vietnam, the Ministers had agreed that the road to peace and stability would be a long one calling for 'vigorous and unremitting efforts' on the part of the South Vietnamese government and its friends in the free world. On the same day that the meeting ended, Holyoake announced that New Zealand would probably send a small team of service personnel to South Vietnam to give assistance in a non-combatant role to the South Vietnamese forces. The Prime Minster was careful to spell out his belief that the struggle in Vietnam remained

> "essentially a struggle to be fought and won by the Vietnamese people themselves.... In this struggle we are not to undertake combat duties; this has not been asked. And it would not be appropriate".[14]

Later Holyoake was to concede that it was "the need for allied solidarity in supporting the people of South Vietnam in their struggle" that had prompted the government to offer assistance in the form of a small military team.[15] It was not the need of the South Vietnamese for the team so much as the need of the Americans for political support for their aid that New Zealand had assuaged.

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[14] Ibid., p27-28

[15] *A.R.D.E.A.* 1964, A.J.H.R. 1964 A-1, p30

In July, 1963, Holyoake had to defend the decision-in-principle in the House of Representatives. The Prime Minister stressed that threats to the peace and security of South-east Asia were threats to New Zealand, and that the government believed that New Zealand had to play its full part in meeting them. The insurgency in South Vietnam was not a local disturbance, he said, but an attack by one government on another. New Zealand was willing to "fly the flag of New Zealand beside the flag of other free countries in the fight against Communist aggression", and regarded its proposed action as somewhat similar to that it had made in Korea in 1950.[16]

Other government speakers were also concerned to establish the link between South Vietnam's security and New Zealand's. D. MacIntyre, in his Address-in-Reply contribution, stated that South Vietnam was New Zealand's north-west border and that those who felt that what was happening there could not touch New Zealand lacked foresight "like a man who skimps on his fire or car insurance".[17] Defence Minister Eyre stated:

> "Our treaties are obviously designed firstly to preserve New Zealand's peace, but a prerequisite of that is to preserve the peace of South-east Asia".[18]

R.D. Muldoon agreed. "I believe our front line is in South-east Asia, that Vietnam and Laos today are fighting our battle, and that they need our help".[19] Another backbencher, R.E. Jack, thought that the gaining of American approval was the important motivation.

> ".. we shall be welcomed by the United States, which is doing so much in the area and naturally likes to feel and have it seen that its allies, however small, are with it".[20]

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[16] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 335, p404-405, July 9, 1963

[17] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 335, p26, 25 June, 1963

[18] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 335, p415, 9 July, 1963

[19] Ibid., p470

[20] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 335, p461, 10 July, 1963

Jack believed that New Zealand's role was to act as a psychological prop for its protector.

By August, three months had gone by since the announcement of the decision-in-principle and no moves seemed to have been made to implement it. At the end of the month a government backbencher asked the Prime Minister in Parliament what was happening. Holyoake replied that the government was still considering the possible roles that a New Zealand service team could be given. The Prime Minister said, however, that it might well not be the time to reach such a decision.[21] This was a reference to a Buddhist campaign of opposition to the South Vietnamese government which was attracting world-wide attention. A month later, Indonesia's confrontation of Malaysia began, and the Prime Minister was, in 1964, to cite the "aggravation of the military threat to Malaysia" as another factor in the non-implementation of the decision.[22]

Some months later, in the early part of 1964, however, the American government put pressure on to its allies for further contributions to South Vietnam by circulating an aide-memoire indicating directions in which additional assistance would be welcomed. These included military aid short of combat units.[23]

In March, 1964, Prime Minister Holyoake visited Vietnam and conferred with the new Prime Minister, General Khanh. Khanh and Holyoake discussed the question of New Zealand aid, and the South Vietnamese leader stated that his government would like to have help

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[21] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 336, pp1522-23, 29 August, 1963

[22] *A.R.D.E.A.* 1964, p30, A.J.H.R. A-1 1964

[23] Harper, N.H. "Australia and the United States" p354 in Greenwood and Harper (eds.) '*Australia in World Affairs 1961-65*'

with the rebuilding of roads and bridges, as this would assist in restoring the economy.

The announcement of a New Zealand military contribution to South Vietnam came finally in May, 1964. The Prime Minister said that the internal situation in Vietnam was more serious at that time than at any other time since the Vietcong had begun their campaign of terrorism. New Zealand, he said, was already giving economic and technical assistance, "but we must do more".[24] It was evident that Vietnam faced a great reconstruction need, and that there was scope for military assistance to this end. New Zealand, he said, strongly supported the United States in the extensive effort it was making to help prevent the absorption of South Vietnam by the Communist North, and the government was determined to do what it could to help the people of South Vietnam. Accordingly, New Zealand would send a team of army engineers to that country. Two years later, the Prime Minister was to say that New Zealand had made the contribution at the request of the SEATO Council in the first instance, which meant the United States. South Vietnam's request was a secondary consideration because it was prompted by the United States. Holyoake said in June, 1966:

> "In April, 1964, the Council agreed that members should do more to help South Vietnam. In response to that call, and in response also to the request from South Vietnam, New Zealand sent a detachment of army engineers.."[25]

At the ANZUS Council meeting held in July, the Americans gave New Zealand a pat on the head for its contribution. The final

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[24] *E.A.R.* May,1964, p22

[25] *E.A.R.* July,1966, p32

communique said that the Council

> "noted with satisfaction that the members of ANZUS had increased their assistance to the Republic of Vietnam since the SEATO Council meeting in April".[26]

The ANZUS Council members agreed that they would remain prepared to take further steps within their respective capabilities to assure the defeat of the aggressors.

The sending of the engineers was taken up in Parliament, with the government evidently feeling a necessity to emphasise the non-combatant nature of the unit. The Minister of Defence told the House that the unit's tasks would be allotted to it by the South Vietnamese Ministry of Works, and that these tasks were very far removed from the tasks of combat engineers.[27]

The government's defensiveness indicated that it continued to share with the Opposition the belief Holyoake had articulated in 1963 that a New Zealand combat role would not be appropriate aid to Vietnam.

The government's attitude was thrown into relief by one of its own backbenchers, the veteran diplomat Sir Leslie Munro, who made it clear that he did not think that the question of combat status was relevant. The government evidently did. Munro probably put his finger on the government attitude when he said: "It is often said that one cannot fight for people who are unwilling to fight for themselves". Munro took the opposite tack: if a country's vital interests were involved, then it had to get involved to the fullest extent.

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[26] *E.A.R.* July, 1964, p54

[27] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 338, pp201-2, 19 June, 1964

He went on to say that he thought New Zealand should, even if in the smallest degree, share the burden of the United States "in a joint effort to establish peace and security in an area vital to this country".[28]

If the government had reservations about how vital it was to sustain a government that could not resist effectively by itself, it shared Munro's conviction that it was vital to live up to American expectations. In the international affairs debate, Munro said that he was not so much concerned with the strict terms of the ANZUS and SEATO Treaties in determining New Zealand's obligations as he was with the reality behind them: "Our ultimate dependence on the United States".[29] It was evident from the Prime Minister's contribution to the same debate that he appreciated Munro's point.

> "The people of New Zealand are deeply conscious of the great burden of defence which is borne by the United States of America especially in the South-east Asian area, and indeed, in the whole Pacific region. With other countries of the region, New Zealand benefits very greatly from American defensive strength and from American efforts to ... ensure that Communist aggression does not succeed in engulfing those countries which wish to preserve their independence and freedom".[30]

At the end of the year, according to the Pentagon Papers, United States President Johnson made a decision "in principle" to initiate a bombing war against North Vietnam. At a White House meeting on December 1, 1964, it was decided that preparations for such a war - Phase One - would begin immediately, with the actual war - Phase Two - waiting upon events. Special envoys were to brief the

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[28] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 338, p151, 18 June, 1964

[29] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 339, p1157, 6 August, 1964

[30] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 339, p1140, 6 August, 1964

key allies on American intentions, and Johnson said that he wanted "new, dramatic and effective" forms of assistance from several of these allies, specifically mentioning Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the Philippines. In each case, the envoy was to explain the American plan and "request additional contributions by way of forces in the event the second phase of United States actions were entered".[31] Thus, if the systematic bombing of North Vietnam were begun, the Americans wanted to escalate the visible support for their actions. The Papers do not spell out the nature of the forces wanted. The draft position paper presented to the decision-makers says only: "Australia and New Zealand will be pressed through their Ambassadors, not only for support but for additional contributions". [32] However, a memorandum sent to the Chief of Staff of the United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, (MACV), as part of the implementation of the December 1 White House decision, stated:

> "Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines should be encouraged to provide combat *advisory* personnel now and, in the event of U.S. troop deployment in RVN [Republic of Vietnam] to provide combatant units to reinforce DMZ [Demilitarised Zone] Defense".[33]

According to the United States Army, the usual procedure for soliciting allied support during the Vietnam War involved MACV sending the governments concerned a list of required forces, after political soundings of the governments had been made. The governments then chose from the

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[31] Sheehan, N. *et al.*, New York Times, *The Pentagon Papers*, Bantam Books, p334

[32] Ibid., p376

[33] Larsen, S.R. and Collins, J.L., United States Department of the Army, *Allied Participation in Vietnam*, p3. Emphasis added by Larsen and Collins.

list what they wished to send, and South Vietnam made a formal request for it.[34]

William P. Bundy left for Australia and New Zealand on December 4 to brief their governments on both phases of the bombing plan, while Britain was informed during Harold Wilson's state visit between December 7 and 9. The New Zealand government expressed to Bundy grave doubts that the bombing would break Hanoi's will, and predicted that it might lead to an increase in North Vietnam's infiltration into South Vietnam.[35] New Zealand seems to have been the only ally to express any reservations. According to the Gravel edition of the Pentagon Papers, both New Zealand and Australia supported the American policy decision as probably necessary, but neither was willing at the time to make a commitment to send troop units to Vietnam.[36] The New Zealand government expressed doubts about the advisability of sending allied ground forces into South Vietnam.[37] The Gravel edition of the Pentagon Papers includes a set of notes compiled by Assistant Secretary of State Bundy for a meeting between the President and the Secretary of State on January 6, 1965. Bundy mentioned that the idea of introducing limited American ground forces into the northern area of South Vietnam concurrent with the first air attacks on North Vietnam still had great appeal for many of the decision-makers.

> "For your information, the Australians have clearly indicated (most recently yesterday) that they might be disposed to participate in such an operation. The New Zealanders are more negative.."[38]

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[34] Ibid., p5

[35] Sheehan, N. Op. Cit., p335

[36] Senator Gravel Edition, *The Pentagon Papers*, Beacon Press, Boston, Volume III, p257

[37] Senator Gravel Edition, *The Pentagon Papers*, Vol. III, p257

[38] Ibid., pp297 and 686

Whereas both governments had been unwilling to make any commitment in early December, the Australian government by early January was becoming more positive about further aid.

In February, 1965, the Americans staged a retaliatory bombing raid of North Vietnam. As Reese notes, the Australian reaction to this was enthusiastic, while New Zealand's was more cautious.[39] The Prime Minister's statement on the incident sought more to explain the American action than to applaud it. Holyoake said that the situation in Vietnam had "become much graver in the last few months", and that the purpose of the raid was clearly to warn Hanoi of the dangers of its policies.[40]

The beginning of the continuous air war against North Vietnam was publicly announced on February 28, and the first attacks were launched on March 2. New Zealand was now under request for the "dramatic" expression of support that Johnson had wanted to coincide with the air war.

The nature of the war, however, was rapidly changing. In February, the American Joint Chiefs of Staff had recommended that American ground troops be sent to guard the air base at Da Nang when the air war against North Vietnam began. On March 8, two battalions of marines were landed at Da Nang, although they were not permitted to engage in offensive operations. When a month's sustained bombing of North Vietnam did not produce the desired results, President Johnson on April 1 decided to commit American ground troops to active operations in the Vietnam War.

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[39] Reese, Op. Cit., p321

[40] *E.A.R.* February, 1965, p21

As a concomitant, forces from the allies were required. National Security Action Memorandum 328, dated April 6, 1965, records that on April 1,

> "the President approved the urgent exploration, with the Korean, Australian and New Zealand governments, of the possibility of rapid deployment of significant combat elements of their armed forces in parallel with additional Marine deployments".[41]

Informal soundings of the governments concerned were evidently made immediately after the decision, for the Army Department's researchers record that both Australia and South Korea indicated informally on April 3, 1965, that they were willing to send combat troops.[42] Significantly, there is no mention of the attitude of the third government concerned - New Zealand. It can probably be assumed that at this stage New Zealand was still hesitating.

The formal exploration of Australian and New Zealand views was apparently undertaken by Henry Cabot Lodge, who arrived in New Zealand on April 19 and flew out for Australia on April 21. On arrival he was quoted in the press as saying: "I am not going to ask New Zealand for military assistance - they know what to do".[43] The American government already had a very accurate idea of what New Zealand could and would send. A cablegram sent by American Ambassador in Saigon, Taylor, to Secretary of State Dean Rusk on April 17 - two days before Lodge arrived in New Zealand - suggested the approach that the American government might make to the Vietnamese government on the subject of Third Country forces. Taylor said that if the Vietnamese government would make urgent

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[41] Sheehan, N. *et al.*, New York Times, *The Pentagon Papers*, p442

[42] Larsen, S.R. and Collins, J.L. *Allied Participation in Vietnam* p9

[43] Kennaway, R. *New Zealand Foreign Policy*, pp75-76, quoting *The Press*, April 20, 1965, p1

representations to the governments concerned,

> "we believe it entirely possible to obtain the following contributions; ... Australia, one infantry battalion; New Zealand, one battery and a company of tanks".[44]

This message suggests that New Zealand had gone as far as to discuss with the Americans the forces it could provide if it did decide to make a contribution; perhaps even that it had decided, since a South Vietnamese request was the last step in the chain.

Although Lodge visited New Zealand before he went to Australia, the Australian government was first, by a considerable margin, to announce a decision to send combat troops to Vietnam. Prime Minister Menzies announced the decision to send an infantry battalion to Vietnam on April 29. This was just prior to the annual SEATO meeting held in London. According to Menzies, a decision-in-principle had been taken some weeks before.

One newspaper reported that the Australian decision was not warmly received in either New Zealand or Britain. In Wellington there was reportedly anger that the Australian action might force New Zealand to send troops to South Vietnam when the military situation did not demand it.[45]

The New Zealand government in 1965, according to R.M. Mullins, the Head of the Department of External Affairs' Defence Section in 1972, was acutely conscious of the limitations on what external assistance could achieve. The government appreciated that the situation in

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[44] Sheehan, N. *et al.*, *The Pentagon Papers*, p445

[45] Elder, J.A. "The New Zealand Labour Party and the Vietnam War", un published M.A. thesis, University of Auckland, 1974, p140, quoting *New Zealand Herald*, May 1, 1965.

South Vietnam was partly due to the failure of the Saigon government to win the allegiance of the population.[46]

> "The prospect in the South was for continued instability and, until more stability was achieved, external assistance could prevent a collapse but not lead to a significant improvement in the security situation ... We recognised that the most external assistance could do would be to buy time for the South Vietnamese themselves to show better results".

Mullins said that the government was under no illusions that air attacks in the North would lead to a significant reduction of support from North Vietnam for operations in the South or incline Hanoi towards negotiation.

> "We were therefore extremely cautious about what could be achieved by the introduction of allied ground combat forces, believing that this could change the nature of the war and must lead on to the committal of very considerable forces.."[47]

The government thought that the introduction of foreign troops would provoke a counter-escalation by the North Vietnamese, who would introduce their own troops, instead of being content to supply and reinforce the Vietcong. However,

> "as evidence accumulated that North Vietnamese combat units - as distinct from personnel and supplies for Viet Cong units - were being introduced into the South, and that the nature of the war had thus actually changed, the case became much stronger".

Jackson says that once Australia had committed troops, New Zealand's position became politically embarrassing. Refusal might have complicated relations not only with the United States, but with Australia.[48]

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[46] Mullins, R.M. "New Zealand's Defence Policy", in *New Zealand Foreign Affairs Review*, July, 1972, p17

[47] Ibid., p18

[48] Jackson, W.K. "New Zealand and South-east Asia", *Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies*, vol. IX No. 1, 1971, p7

The Australian government felt strongly that a contribution to Vietnam was a necessary means of retaining American support against Indonesia should heavy fighting break out in New Guinea. Albinski says:

> "If the Australian government hoped that under certain contingencies the United States would not remain indifferent during an escalated war in Borneo, or during possible Indonesian forays into Australian New Guinea - intimate concerns of Australia - Australia had to demonstrate, in Vietnam, which was America's intimate concern, that it did not apply a double standard to ANZUS and other obligations".[49]

Australia would be naturally anxious that New Zealand, also participating in ANZUS cover in Borneo, should not spoil the "loyal partners" image to Australia's detriment.

The New Zealand government, however, did not need reminding by Australia that its own Borneo forces needed American cover. Reflecting in 1970 on New Zealand's relations with the United States, External Affairs officer W.B. Harland linked New Zealand's Vietnam response to its appreciation during Confrontation of the need for American support. He told the Otago University Foreign Policy School that in the 'fifties New Zealand had been concerned that the United States might go too far in its defence of South-east Asia - citing 1954 and 1959 as examples - and had tried to restrain the United States. In resisting Indonesian pressure,

> "we ... realised anew our need for American support. The wheel[of alternatively trying to commit the Americans to the defence of South-east Asia and urging restraint on them] came full circle [from 1959] with the sending of Australian and New Zealand forces to Vietnam in 1965".[50]

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[49] Albinski, H.A. "Australia's Foreign Policy: The Lessons of Vietnam", p370 in Preston, R. (ed.) "*Contemporary Australia*"

[50] Harland, W.B. "New Zealand's Relations with the U.S.A.", *N.Z.F.A.R.* May, 1970, p9

If New Zealand had been of a mind to decline a contribution to South-east Asia, as in 1959, it would have had to have done so without the Australian support it had had in 1959.

At the SEATO meeting for 1965, which was held in London a day after the Australian announcement, New Zealand's representative, Defence Minister Eyre, expressed his approval of the American decision to enter the ground war in Vietnam.[51] The final communique of the meeting stated that the member governments had agreed to increase their assistance to South Vietnam, "consistent with their commitments elsewhere".[52] New Zealand's announcement that it would send troops to Vietnam, did not come, however, until late in May - a full month after Australia's. A formal request for troops came from South Vietnam on May 10.[53] This request followed the pattern for Vietnamese requests of appearing immediately after a SEATO meeting.

On May 13, the Prime Minister made a major policy statement on the Vietnam situation, in which he acknowledged that the issue which was of deepest concern for New Zealand was "whether we should give military assistance to South Vietnam". The question, to all appearances, was still open. Holyoake said that the government had made no decision at that stage about how it might best give further help.[54] If the Prime Minister were to be believed, New Zealand was prepared to make an additional contribution of aid to Vietnam, but had given no assurance to Cabot Lodge or anyone at the SEATO meeting that it would make an offer of military asssistance. The delay of New Zealand's

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[51] *E.A.R.* May, 1965, p20

[52] Ibid., p25

[53] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 342. p1, 27 May, 1965

[54] *E.A.R.* May, 1965, p11

announcement after the Australian one is some evidence for the proposition that the government was concerned about having to make a military commitment. In his May 13 statement, the Prime Minister characterised the forthcoming decision as one of the utmost importance and consequence, and said that the government had been giving it "the most anxious and earnest consideration for many months".[55]

A clue to the way the decision would go - if any were needed after contextual considerations were taken into account - was Holyoake's declaration that although the government had not yet made its decision, the New Zealand government fully supported the action taken by the United States at the request of the Government of Vietnam "and more recently the support announced by the Australian government".[56]

The unilateral action by the United States of putting troops into Vietnam gave New Zealand little choice if it wished to preserve the ANZUS relationship. During previous South-east Asian crises (in 1954 and 1959), New Zealand had had a chance to object to military intervention before it had taken place, and had acted as a constraint to such intervention. Once intervention had taken place, the situation was different. As W.B. Harland noted in 1970, New Zealand had learned from her experience in 1944 with the ANZAC Pact that the United States

> "did not like being lectured by small allies on how to use its own power and it was prepared to underwrite our security only if we co-operated with it in the Pacific area generally".[57]

In his May 13 statement, the Prime Minister had listed the factors the government would have to take into account in making the decision.

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[55] *E.A.R.* May, 1965, p11

[56] Ibid.

[57] Harland, W.B. "New Zealand's Relations with the U.S.A." *N.Z.F.A.R.* May, 1970, p9

The first point, significantly, was that the government's concern for New Zealand's security had involved New Zealand in defence treaties whose provisions had to be honoured.[58] The implication was that if New Zealand did not live up to her obligations, the value of the treaties for her would be non-existent. Holyoake's use of the plural indicated that he was thinking of ANZUS as well as SEATO, although technically the conditions to bring ANZUS into play did not exist. Another point was that the war in Vietnam was the result of North Vietnamese aggression, and that this aggression concerned New Zealand because it could lead to a threat to New Zealand's security.

If South Vietnam fell, it would eventually be the turn of every other smaller country in the region. The Prime Minister asked: "if we are not prepared to play our part now, can we in good conscience expect our allies to help later on?"[59]

The Prime Minister moved on from reasons of self-interest to those concerned with morality. Should North Vietnam be allowed to impose its will by force on South Vietnam? The lesson of history was clear that New Zealand should stand firm in support of smaller nations like South Vietnam.

In an article on Vietnamese policy written for Otago University's student paper, the Prime Minister's main accent was on New Zealand's interest, as a small country, in the rule of international law.

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[58] *E.A.R.* May, 1965, p12

[59] Ibid.

> "If we want security, we must establish now that armed assistance across international borders, both provisional and fixed, to sustain "wars of liberation" must be checked ... The government believes both in terms of its treaties and of the United Nations Charter that New Zealand must assist in resisting aggression".[60]

Holyoake said that the idea that North Vietnam's aggression was excusable because South Vietnam was not a democracy would have prevented a stand against Hitler over Poland and in present-day circumstances would be completely destructive of world order.

The Prime Minister also returned to New Zealand's interest in keeping the alliance system viable or 'oiled'. Failure to act in Vietnam by New Zealand, the Prime Minister said, would be to make a mockery of the foreign policy New Zealand had followed over the previous thirty years. While New Zealand's military aid would have to be small,

> "it will have political value out of proportion to its size. It will show we are not fair-weather friends. It will show we value our treaty obligations and intend to meet them".[61]

This show of determination was for the benefit of the United States. Once the United States had decided it had obligations under the alliance, New Zealand felt bound to follow suit.

The Prime Minister's announcement of the offer of an artillery battery to Vietnam was made in Parliament on May 27. In speaking of the reasons for the decision, Holyoake said the government had borne in mind New Zealand's record as a staunch supporter of the rights of small states to live free from external interference and aggression. He said that the example of Czechoslovakia's vain call for aid and the unwise faith of appeasement was before them all. He then went on

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[60] *E.A.R.* May, 1965, pp6-7.

[61] *E.A.R.* May, 1965, p10

to outline three significant developments in the Vietnam situation which were the implied stimuli to the New Zealand commitment. They were the worsening situation in Vietnam and the resultant stepping up of American military assistance to the government of South Vietnam; the Australian decision to make available a battalion of infantry; and thirdly, the May 10 request from the South Vietnamese government.[62] This last, however, can probably be discounted, as it would not have been made without prior New Zealand acquiescence, and, as we have seen, American prompting. The order of priority is interesting: the request from the South Vietnamese government is a poor third to the stepped up American military aid, and secondly, Australian military commitment.

Holyoake again made the point that the war in Vietnam was a war of aggression and a vote in favour of the motion to approve committal of troops meant that "quite apart from our own New Zealand interests, ... we are still concerned about the fate of small countries threatened by aggression".[63] While this may have been so, the concern would not have been expressed other than verbally had the aggression not been in South-east Asia, thus directly affecting what New Zealand saw as her interests, and being resisted by the Americans. As Riddiford was to say in Parliament in July, 1966:

> "It would be ridiculous to suggest that New Zealand should send forces to any quarter of the world wherever aggression take place, but we are definitely concerned with the area to our north in South Vietnam".[64]

The abstract principle of blanket resistance to acts of aggression wherever they occurred was given lip service to, but the Prime Minister

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[62] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 342, p8, 28 May, 1965

[63] Ibid., p11

[64] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 347, p1187, 6 July, 1966

also had to anchor the government's case solidly in short-term national interest. He told Parliament that if Vietnam were lost, then the task of defending Malaysia - an accepted national interest - could become impossible, because after Vietnam, Malaysia's neighbour Thailand would be affected.[65] Deputy Prime Minister Marshall drove home the point:

> "The crux of the matter for us is that Communist aggression in Vietnam is a threat to us. If South Vietnam is overrun and becomes a Communist State it becomes the base for the next move in the Communist plan for world revolution ... Our security and our way of life are at stake and we cannot stand aside".[66]

This sort of rhetoric would seem to have justified a much greater New Zealand effort. But New Zealand's effort was not directed towards physically stopping the North Vietnamese herself, but towards spurring the Americans on to do it. Marshall said that while New Zealand's contribution was small, its main value was in its moral force. "It shows where we stand". The action was primarily symbolic. No Minister suggested that New Zealand should throw itself into the conflict more deeply.

J.R. Hanan, the Minister of Justice, argued the necessity to support the United States as a matter of self-interest. He said:

> "... the ultimate security of the peoples of this part of the South Pacific and in Australia and New Zealand lies only in the power, the support and the goodwill of the United States".[67]

Hanan went on to say that a section of the American public would have the United States abandon its Pacific commitments, and in that event the whole of the South-east Asia would fall to the Communists: -

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[65] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 342, p9, 28 May, 1965

[66] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 342, p17, 28 May, 1965

[67] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 342, p23, 28 May, 1965

> "... should this movement come south without opposition being offered by our friend the United States, New Zealand would be overwhelmed by sheer weight of numbers, with no effective help from anywhere".

Hanan declared:

> "Never was there a more obvious time for us to stand by the United States if we are to rely on the United States for support should we face aggression".[68]

Eyre, the Minister for Defence, was equally keen to stress the point of New Zealand's keeping American goodwill. "Let us remember .. that while our ally, the United States, continues its efforts in Vietnam, and Great Britain continues her effort in Malaysia, the contribution that we make now - I repeat, now - will influence their goodwill in helping us if help is needed in the years to come".[69]

The backbenchers echoed the need to support the Americans. R.D. Muldoon mentioned the vital part the Americans were playing in New Zealand's interests. "I believe it is no exaggeration to say that today one man and his resolution stands between New Zealand and an Asiatic Communist tide, and that man is Lyndon Johnson..."[70] R.E. Jack said that New Zealand's duty and interest demanded that it stood alongside its American allies. "If we are to expect the support of our allies, we must justify it".[71]

Of the other Ministers to speak, Shand was concerned to point out that New Zealand was not defending the Government of South Vietnam but territorial integrity of South Vietnam. He said that the situation was similar to that of Ethiopia before the Second World War when it was

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[68] Ibid.

[69] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 342, p238, 8 June, 1965

[70] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 342, p145, 3 June, 1965

[71] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 342, p272, 9 June, 1965

invaded by Italy: the Ethiopian government may have been corrupt and medieval, but that was irrelevant to the principle at stake. Any championing of Ethiopia was not for the sake of the government "but to remind aggressors that freedom-loving people were prepared to stand together".[72] The Minister was also concerned to defend the government's action in the light of the British government's inaction in Vietnam. He pointed out that Britain had indicated full moral support for what was being done in Vietnam, but its reasons for not sending troops - the British position as co-chairman of the Geneva Conference and the heavy commitment in Malaysia - were "good and understandable".

Even if Britain had opposed the American commitment of troops, and thus New Zealand's commitment, it would probably have made little difference. Britain was no longer New Zealand's prime protector and her influence was less accordingly. The New Zealand government was aware at this time - as it was to admit later - that the British government was contemplating a cut-back of its forces in South-east Asia, and that New Zealand would correspondingly become more dependent than ever on American protection.

In June, Shand was to make the point that the government and its advisers had felt that New Zealand had very little option in terms of its objectives than to act as it had.

> "The course we are following has been expressed to us as the unanimous view of our advisers in this field. They are firmly of the view that what the government is doing is right and that there is no alternative course".[73]

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[72] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 342, p30, 28 May, 1965

[73] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 342, p300, 9 June, 1965

In 1967, Holyoake himself reiterated that the Secretary of External Affairs had advised the government strongly to send a contingent of troops.

> "I am ... absolutely certain, because I was so close to him, that there was no man in New Zealand stronger in the belief that New Zealand had an obligation that we must make a military commitment in aid of South Vietnam than Alister McIntosh".[74]

Even so, the government had been hesitant about a military commitment, probably up until the Australian move. J.R. Marshall, the Deputy Prime Minister, told Parliament in 1966 that the decision to send combat troops to Vietnam "was not easy to make", and that it could easily have been side-stepped. "We could have pleaded that our commitments elsewhere precluded our making a military contribution".[75]

The government's decision to send combat troops to Vietnam was immediately opposed by the Labour Party. The Leader of the Opposition since 1963, Arnold Nordmeyer, told Parliament on May 28 that the Labour Party had "grave doubts about the wisdom of military intervention in South Vietnam".[76] The main objection, according to Nordmeyer, was that New Zealand had a prior obligation to Malaysia, and the country should not dissipate its military resources in other areas when the future demands of the Malaysian theatre were unknown. Nordmeyer also, however, questioned the legitimacy of the government of South Vietnam which had invited the New Zealand contribution.

"Does it really represent the people of South Vietnam?"[77] The Labour leader said that the party preferred economic aid to South Vietnam rather than military aid.

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[74] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 353, p3716, 26 October, 1967

[75] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 349, p3346, 13 October, 1966

[76] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 342, p12, 28 May, 1965

[77] Ibid.

The Labour Party's second speaker in the debate on the commitment, N.E. Kirk, added further objections. "We feel that any military intervention by New Zealand in this area should be part of a peacekeeping unit through some international organisation",[78] he said. Kirk went on to decry military intervention to solve a problem that was not conducive to a military solution. Escalation of the conflict by foreign military units only lessened the chance of a negotiated settlement and increased the risk of a general war. There was also the undeniable fact that the Vietnamese Communists could not have made the progress they had without significant support from the South Vietnamese peasantry.[79] The containment of Communism could be achieved best by changing the economic circumstances which confronted the mass of the people.

Other Labour Party speakers reiterated these basic points, pointing out that the conflict was essentially a civil war between South Vietnamese and that Communism could not be contained militarily. The response of the party had much in common with its response to the Laotian situation in 1959.

There were the same doubts about the degree of external intervention, and about the efficacy of a military solution to a problem whose origins were economic. There was the same desire to become involved only in a United Nations framework.

It was evident that the New Zealand government, too, was not enthusiastic about a military commitment, and much more keen on promoting a negotiated settlement. Prime Minister Holyoake, at the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference in June, 1965, offered to postpone the sending of New Zealand's artillery battery to South

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[78] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 342, p18, 28 May, 1965

[79] Op. Cit. pp19-20

Vietnam if the North Vietnamese would receive, and begin negotiations with, the Peace Mission established by the conference.[80] At a press conference in London, Holyoake also proposed that the National Liberation Front (the umbrella organisation of the Vietnamese Communists) should be involved in the negotiations. This was far enough in front of the American position to force the government to issue a clarification to the effect that the Prime Minister had not suggested at any time that the Vietcong (Vietnamese Communists) be recognised as a party to the negotiations, but rather as a part of the North Vietnamese delegation.[81] The New Zealand Prime Minister's view resulted naturally from the government's recognition that the Vietcong was an indigenous movement encouraged by the weaknesses of the South Vietnamese government as well as by the arms and reinforcements of North Vietnam. The American government in mid-1965 did not acknowledge that there were any indigenous elements in the Vietcong. It purported to believe that the bulk of the personnel were North Vietnamese.[82] According to one scholar, Holyoake pressed the United States at the ANZUS Council at the end of June to order a bombing pause while the Commonwealth mission got underway.[83] The Americans, however, did not cease the bombing, and North Vietnam did not receive the Commonwealth mission.

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[80] Reese, Op. Cit., p321. The Commonwealth Peace Mission, a proposal of British Prime Minister Harold Wilson, was to consist of the Prime Ministers of Britain, Nigeria, Ghana and Trinidad. The refusal of the governments of China, the Soviet Union and North Vietnam to receive it effectively ended its life. See Wilson, J.H. *The Labour Government 1964-70* pp110-114; p122-23

[81] *E.A.R.* June, 1965, p34

[82] *E.A.R.* July, 1965, p18. Secretary of State Dean Rusk's replies at Press Conference, 18 June, 1965

[83] Reese, T.R. Op. Cit., p322

In July, the government published a White Paper to explain its decision on Vietnam. The paper concentrated on the rights and wrongs of the situation in Vietnam, and rather less on the context of New Zealand's foreign policy: the demands of the alliance system, which had been given expression to in the Parliamentary debates.

That these demands were still operating after the sending of the artillery battery was shown by the visit of United States Vice-President Humphrey to New Zealand in February, 1966. Humphrey, in a speech to Cabinet, reminded the government that New Zealand's stake in Vietnam was greater than that of the United States.

> "This battle is over the right of small nations to survive. Big nations, powerful nations, may well survive ... [but] every small nation in size has a stake in the outcome of the struggle in Vietnam".

The Vice-President went on to point out that a continuing military commitment to South Vietnam on New Zealand's part would be regarded first and foremost as a commitment to the United States: a proof of her reliability as an ally, in the same way as the commitment of the United States to Vietnam could be taken as an earnest of her willingness to defend New Zealand.

> "My government did make a commitment and we are keeping it and I want you to know that if we can keep it there, we will keep it here, and I want you to know that if <u>you</u> keep it there we know that you will keep it with us, and that is what is important, contract, reliability, honour ..."[84]

Commitment to Vietnam in Humphrey's eyes was a test of the ANZUS alliance. The Vice-President emphasised that treaties retained their validity only as long as they were seen to be given continuing practical expression to. He apparently felt bound to remind the

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[84] *E.A.R.* February, 1966, p29. emphasis added.

New Zealand government of the truism that the ultimate success or failure of an alliance depends on the way it is maintained. This maintenance, Rothstein asserts, involves the translating of common interests and aims into effective operational policies.[85] The United States had decided that military intervention was the best way of upholding the common defence interests of New Zealand and the United States in Vietnam and it was up to New Zealand to support that policy.

> "I must say to you that you would feel surely less than secure here in New Zealand .. if the treaty that we have with you was only something to be recorded in the history books and not to be honoured by men in our time".[86]

Humphrey may well have been trying to get another military contribution from New Zealand. It would seem from the evidence, however, that the New Zealand government had emphasised to him that New Zealand was fully stretched militarily in Malaysia. In a statement issued on the discussions between the Vice-President and the government, Holyoake emphasised that Humphrey, on behalf of the American government, had recognised that New Zealand's primary efforts in both defence and economic aid should be concentrated on Malaysia, other Commonwealth Asian countries, and allies such as Thailand.[87]

Just prior to Humphrey's visit to New Zealand, the American Army Commander in Vietnam, General Westmoreland, had approached New Zealand's Ambassador to South Vietnam over the possibility of increased military aid from New Zealand. Specifically, Westmoreland wanted a battalion of infantry for a proposed ANZAC brigade of three

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[85] Rothstein, R.C. *Alliances and Small Powers*, p55

[86] *E.A.R.* February, 1966, p29

[87] *E.A.R.* February, 1966, p31

battalions.[88] A second battalion would come from Australia. At the end of February a representative from New Zealand's Department of External Affairs met Westmoreland and offered to increase the strength of New Zealand's artillery battery from four to six guns: a rather feeble substitute, but all the government believed it could do. This increase was announced in March. The Australians, in the meantime, had come through with the extra battalion Westmoreland wanted. It seems that the government's main reason for the non-response was political, although it had reasonable military grounds for its attitude. New Zealand had only one regular infantry battalion, and it was in Malaysia. Confrontation was not yet officially over. Larsen and Collins state that the March increase was made "despite election year pressure", and when the Chief of the New Zealand Army General Staff met Westmoreland in Vietnam later in the year, he told him that New Zealand might respond to further requests for aid after the November elections.[89]

On the domestic political scene, the government's Vietnam policy was becoming more sharply opposed by the Labour Opposition. Until May, 1966, the Labour Party, while critical of the government's military contribution, had been uncertain of its policy in regard to withdrawing the troops. The new Leader of the Opposition (since December, 1965), N.E. Kirk, was reported in April as saying that the party had made no commitment to withdraw the troops if it became the government.[90] That same month, however, the Joint Council of Labour

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[88] Larsen, S.R. and Collins, J.L. Op. Cit., p105

[89] Larsen, S.R. and Collins, J.L. Op. Cit., pp105-106

[90] Elder, J.A. "The New Zealand Labour Party and the Vietnam War", p153

(the combined executives of the Labour Party and the Federation of Labour) called unequivocally for the withdrawal of the troops. This was endorsed in May by the Labour Party conference. Vietnam policy was shaping up as a major issue for the general election due in November.

In Parliament, National members defended the government's policy by emphasising that New Zealand had to support American efforts once the United States had decided on a line of action. The government Whip, J.E. Harrison, stated that now that New Zealand was losing the British presence in South-east Asia, it was more than ever dependent upon the United States and must act accordingly. New Zealand must "recognise its friends and stick close to them".[91] Walsh asked: "What does ANZUS mean if we intend to disregard entirely what America is asking for?"[92] Defence Minister Eyre was perhaps the bluntest exponent of this 'loyalty to powerful friends' view. He said:

> "We should support the United States [not, significantly, South Vietnam] so that we, in turn, may expect support at some time in the future when we need it ... What we do now will form a pattern for the future. If we do not do our share now in protecting the small and the weak, then we must face the likelihood that in the years ahead, when we may need help, it might not be so generously forthcoming".

Eyre went on to quote the Deputy Prime Minister of Australia to the effect that it was of the utmost importance that Australia so act as to be entitled to expect the certainty of American protective action if its security were under attack. 'We are there', McEwen had said, 'to make clear that the substance of our alliance with the United States is not one-sided'. Eyre said that the same applied to New Zealand.[93] The alliance was a living thing that had to be serviced or it might die.

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[91] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 346, p188, 3 June, 1966
[92] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 346, p207, 3 June, 1966
[93] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 346, p250, 7 June, 1966

At this time, the government reiterated its view, first put out in the Defence Review of 1961, that the alliance system demanded that New Zealand be prepared to support her allies in all their serious initiatives, whether or not these directly concerned New Zealand's interests. The 1966 Defence Review in its list of "the more substantial" objectives of New Zealand's National Security policy, put in fourth place the objective of establishing a claim upon New Zealand's major allies for military assistance and protection in time of need. The establishment of the claim required New Zealand to demonstrate willingness and ability to assist her allies in matters affecting their national interests - with the "their" italicised.[94]

Sir Guy Powles, the Ombudsman and former diplomat, was even blunter than the Defence Review in supplying a rationale for New Zealand's participation in the Vietnam conflict. Powles told a school audience in Dunedin that New Zealand knew that it was not of fundamental importance to the United States, and it was in its interests to show the United States that it was useful.[95] Sir Guy showed in his speech that he believed that the government was aware that the ANZUS alliance had no strategic validity for the United States, and that New Zealand could therefore never sit back and take the alliance for granted.

Even if the argument were accepted that an attack on New Zealand would only come in the context of a general war in which the United States would inevitably be involved, the government apparently still thought that New Zealand had a reason for playing the American

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[94] *Review of Defence Policy 1966* p6; A.J.H.R. 1966 A-8

[95] *O.D.T.* June 16, 1966, p9

way. D.M. Riddiford, speaking in Parliament in July, 1966, said:

> "I think that if we maintain our sense of obligation ... we can be confident that, because of the way in which we have stood by our obligations in the past, the Americans will regard New Zealand, in the unthinkable event of a general war, as being a country whose territory should be protected rather than liberated in due course".[96]

In October, 1966, President Johnson visited New Zealand. The Prime Minister said in a statement issued after discussions between the two that he welcomed the President's affirmation of his country's determination to continue to play a role in New Zealand's part of the world commensurate with its position as a major Pacific power.

> "We agreed that there was a continuing need for our two countries, and other like-minded countries, to work together to help maintain regional stability and encourage orderly change .. We ... recognise that there was a continuing need for joint endeavours in the defence field in order to provide that shield behind which social and political advancement could take place ... Naturally we affirmed our determination to continue giving South Vietnam such military assistance as was necessary until the North Vietnamese stopped their aggression".[97]

Even under the admitted necessity of supporting the United States, New Zealand continued to show that it was unenthusiastic about aspects of the Vietnam policy. The government had never been happy with the bombing campaign against North Vietnam, and when the United States made a decision to bomb oil installations around the metropolitan areas of North Vietnam, the statement issued by New Zealand was less one of support than one in explanation. Acting Prime Minister Hanan said that the American decision had to be seen

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[96] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 347, p1188, 6 July, 1966

[97] *E.A.R.* October, 1966, p24

"within the context of Hanoi's protracted refusal to have the problem of Vietnam settled at the conference table".

The possible effects of the decision on the character of the war and on prospects for a peaceful settlement had been, he was sure, carefully weighed. The New Zealand government "fully understood" the circumstances which had led the United States to its action.[98] New Zealand's rather tepid statement stood in the middle of British and Australian reactions. New Zealand would not go along with the British Labour government's dissociation of itself from the American action, but neither did it publicly express the enthusiasm for it that the Australian government did.

In the official communique issued by the ANZUS Council in July, 1966, New Zealand joined with the Australians and Americans in recognising "the military necessity for the recent bombing of fuel installations in the Hanoi-Haiphong area which played an important role in sustaining the aggression against the Republic of Vietnam".[99]

With the official ending of Confrontation in August, 1966, New Zealand's active commitment to Malaysia resumed a passive status, and New Zealand no longer had the excuse of a war elsewhere to ward off American desire for greater participation in the Vietnam conflict.

After November, 1966, too, the government could feel with justification that it had a political mandate for aiding Vietnam. In an election fought to a considerable extent around the Vietnam issue, the government had a comfortable victory, although it lost votes and one seat. After the election, the Prime Minister instructed the new Defence Minister (Thomson) to review the entire military aid

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[98] *E.A.R.* June, 1966, p29

[99] *E.A.R.* July, 1966, p34

situation and in doing so to consider the use of all or part of the New Zealand battalion in Malaysia in Vietnam.[100] The possibility of the redeploying of troops from Malaysia to Vietnam was announced publicly on December 20.[101] The New Zealand government listed its military aid options as: an S.A.S. company; an armoured personnel carrier troop; the infantry battalion in Malaysia; and part of the infantry battalion in Malaysia. These choices were passed to the American Military Assistance Command in Vietnam, which indicated a preference for the full battalion, with part of the battalion as second choice and the S.A.S company as third choice.[102] Nevertheless, the New Zealand government decided to send only one company of the battalion to Vietnam. This may have been due to British or Malaysian wishes that some forces be kept with the Strategic Reserve.

An announcement of a decision to increase the number of troops in South Vietnam was made on March 8, 1967.

> "After the most careful consideration, the government has decided that, now that it is in a position to do so, New Zealand ought to make a further contribution to the allied military effort in the defence of South Vietnam. Until recently our armed forces have been heavily committed .. in helping Malaysia and Singapore.."

The Prime Minister said that whereas previously there had been two centres of active military operations in South-east Asia, there was now only one - in Vietnam.

> "We could not escape the conclusion that, in the light of this country's obligations under the Manila Treaty, and consistent with our firm adherence to the principles of collective defence and our support for the rights of small nations, a further effort by New Zealand was called for".[103]

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[100] Larsen, S.R. and Collins, J.L. *Allied Participation in Vietnam*, p106

[101] See N.Z.P.D. vol. 350, p686, 18 May, 1967

[102] Larsen, S.R. and Collins, J.L. Op. Cit., pp106-107

[103] *E.A.R.* March, 1967, p40

It was at this time that the Permanent Secretary for External Affairs, G.R. Laking, in two public addresses, stressed the political necessity of keeping New Zealand's vital alliances oiled in order to keep the United States involved in the defence of South-east Asia. Addressing the Rotary Club of Wellingon, Laking said that New Zealand, in approaching Asian problems, had to take into account "the continuing role of the United States in the Asian area". It was worth remembering, he said, that the United States was not inevitably involved in Asia: that this was a very recent development. During President Kennedy's time, for example, it was quite clear that Europe, not Asia, was the main focus of regional attention.

Laking said that even Johnson had not committed the United States to the proposition that Asia was as important to the national interests of the American people as was Europe, until 1966. "This promise of a continuing American involvement in Asia presents a challenge to all of us". The essential consideration for New Zealand was that it should be clear about what it wanted to achieve by American involvement in Asia. Laking said that he believed that New Zealand wanted to use the presence of American power not only as a means of containing Communist China but as a shield behind which countries could consolidate their independence.[104] It was neither in New Zealand's interest nor in that of Asia itself that the concern of the Great Powers for Asia's stability should be diminished. Speaking to the Political Science Society of Victoria University of Wellington early the next month, Laking returned to the point, and made it more explicit that New Zealand's actions were designed to keep an American interest in Asia.

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[104] *E.A.R.* March, 1967, p18

> "..we would be wise to remember that there is nothing inevitable about a continuing and major commitment on the part of the United States .. [and] ... I think there is no question that a continuing American military presence is of the utmost importance in underpinning the security of the area, and we in New Zealand must do what we can to ensure that it is maintained".[105]

The External Affairs Secretary made it plain that New Zealand's foreign policy in Asia was based on a hard realism.

> "We have learned the hard lesson that no one owes us a living, that sentiment and custom alone will not ensure that others look after our security, and that if we want to maintain the continued well-being of our people we have to pay our way in an international community that has no special interest in seeing that New Zealand continues to survive as a stable and prosperous nation on the fringes of an unstable and desperately poor Asian continent".

Because New Zealand could not protect itself, it had to engage a protector, and this meant paying a price.

"Our military strength is not sufficient to ensure our defence if we were ever confronted by this necessity".

The Secretary admitted that the prospect of having to ensure New Zealand's defence was a remote one at that time, but he said that it could not be excluded for all time.

> "This again suggests that we cannot expect in the future to call on the assistance of our friends if we have not, in the meantime ... been pulling our weight in collective defence arrangements".

Laking therefore backed up the government's assertion that New Zealand's foreign policy in South-east Asia must necessarily be one of insurance.

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[105] *E.A.R.* May, 1967, p20. Laking, G.R. "Problems of N.Z's Foreign Policy".

> "If we do not, by our own efforts, make our contribution to wider international stability, no one is going to give much thought to helping us preserve our continuing independence ... If we do not take .. steps to enhance our usefulness in the international community our value as a friend and partner would soon be overlooked".[106]

Apart from her ineffective military capacity, New Zealand was further handicapped in the matter of protection by her lack of strategic importance to any potential protector. Not only did she need a protector, but New Zealand had little to offer the protector for the protection. Laking said:

> "... to put it bluntly ... we are one of the few countries which could be regarded as expendable".

This was a further impetus towards policies of insurance on New Zealand's part.

In July, 1967, there were reports in the press that American governmental and military leaders had met in Saigon and had discussed the possibility of calling on New Zealand for more troops for the Vietnam War. The Prime Minister, asked to comment, chose to say that New Zealand troops were in Vietnam at the request of the South Vietnamese government and not at the request of any of New Zealand's other allies. More to the point, perhaps, Holyoake said that New Zealand kept the situation under constant review, and would not shrink, if the situation called for it, from strengthening the Vietnam force.[107] At the end of the month the government was visited by two members of the American administration - Clark Clifford and General Maxwell Taylor. The two had talks with Cabinet.

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[106] *E.A.R.* May, 1967, pp16-17

[107] *E.A.R.* July, 1967, p23

In a statement issued for the occasion, Holyoake said that the purpose of the Americans' visit was

> "to consult the New Zealand Government on the situation in Vietnam and the prospects for the future".[108]

The Prime Minister said that there was no question of any decisions being taken, although there had been no mention of the necessity for any decision, or what the decisions were about. In the Supply Debate in Parliament a few days afterwards, Labour's A.M. Finlay wanted to know what had happened at the meeting with Taylor and Clifford. He said that a respected columnist, Ian Templeton, had reported that the New Zealand government had thrown its weight behind efforts to restrain American hawks seeking to escalate the Vietnam War. N.V. Douglas referred to a *New Zealand Herald* report on August 2 that reported Holyoake saying that he had

> "put forward quite strongly to General Taylor and Mr Clark Clifford that the ability of New Zealand to play a larger military role abroad was limited by overseas funds".

Holyoake had also reportedly said that a bigger New Zealand force in Vietnam had not been specifically mentioned, although the subject had underlain the conversation.[109]

Clifford was to admit in 1969, after the American administration had changed and he was out of office, that the purpose of his mission had been to elicit further troops from the ANZAC countries.

In Australia, Clifford recorded, Prime Minister Holt presented him with a long list of reasons why Australia was already close to its maximum effort. In New Zealand, the reaction was similar.

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[108] *E.A.R.* August, 1967, p24

[109] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 352, p2145 and p2148, 8 August, 1967

> "In New Zealand, we spent the better part of a day conferring with the Prime Minister and his Cabinet ... These officials were courteous and sympathetic ... but they made it clear that any appreciable increase was out of the question. New Zealand at one time had 70,000 troops overseas in the various theatres of World War Two. They had 500 men in Vietnam. I naturally wondered if this was their evaluation of the respective dangers of the two conflicts".[110]

Whatever the degree of the American administration's belief in its own rhetoric about the danger to southern areas posed by a Communist takeover in Vietnam, it was quite evident that the New Zealand government did not believe it at all. It was, however, necessary, New Zealand thought, to continue making gestures. The next month it was announced that Holyoake would travel to Canberra to confer with Australian Prime Minister Holt. Asked at a press conference before he left if the forthcoming talks would include the possibility of sending the rest of the New Zealand battalion in Malaysia to Vietnam, the Prime Minister replied that the idea was bound to be studied.[111] On his arrival in Canberra, he said that New Zealand would not flinch from increasing its Vietnam force, but stressed that there was no proposal to do this before the government at that time.[112] When Holyoake left Canberra he was still denying the existence of any proposal to send troops to Vietnam. On October 18, however, the Prime Minister announced that in response to a request from the South Vietnamese government, the New Zealand government had decided on an increase in its military assistance.[113] Holyoake said

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[110] Clifford, Clark M. "A Vietnam Reappraisal", *Foreign Affairs* vol. 47 No. 4, July 1969, p607

[111] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 353, p3681, 26 October, 1967

[112] Ibid.

[113] *E.A.R.* October, 1967, p29

that he had discussed the Vietnam situation with Holt in Canberra and that they had considered the possibility of a joint increase in the ANZAC force in Vietnam. It is possible, then, that the formal South Vietnamese request had arrived some time in September and that the journey to Canberra had been to discuss a response to it. It may well have been that the New Zealand Prime Minister was not very keen on responding to the South Vietnamese-American request (in line with his reported attitude on escalation as expressed to Clifford), but had discovered that the Australian Prime Minister was, and thus had acquiesced. There are some further clues to such an interpretation. First, the New Zealand decision was rushed to conform to an Australian timetable. Holyoake admitted that, because the Australian government did not want to delay the announcement of a decision beyond October 18, and because the New Zealand government believed it "almost essential" that New Zealand and Australia should make a joint statement "as a demonstration ... to the world, that Australia and New Zealand stand together", the announcement of the New Zealand decision had not been delayed until the House of Representatives convened the following week.[114] Marshall, in his contribution to the debate, said that the proposal for the increase had been put first before Cabinet on the Monday after October 4 (that is, October 9) and a decision had been made on October 16.[115] Evidently the Australians, since they had wanted to announce before October 18, had made their decision earlier and were waiting for New Zealand to make up its mind.

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[114] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 353, p3669, 26 October, 1967

[115] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 353, p3681, 26 October, 1967

The Deputy Prime Minister added substance to the thesis that New Zealand was levered into a further commitment by Australia by quoting in Parliament a *Dominion* article that speculated that Holyoake was a dove on the Vietnam War and Holt a hawk. The article said that Australian journalists were wondering this after Holyoake had given qualified support for a further pause in the bombing of North Vietnam, and had reiterated his statement that a purely military solution to the war was not possible. By quoting the article, the Deputy Prime Minister implied that it was accurate.[116] Labour's N.R. King cited an *Auckland Star* editorial on the October 18 announcement, to the effect that Clifford and Taylor had appealed for stronger support from Australia and New Zealand, and that Australia had decided almost immediately to respond. New Zealand, King said, was tagging along behind the Australian decision.[117] Another Labour member, J. Mathison, quoted the *Otago Daily Times* editorial of October 19, which said that New Zealand has "obviously been under not only American but Australian pressure to increase military aid".[118] The Otago paper had deplored the absence of convincing reasons for the increase, but the next month Holyoake, in a review of Vietnam policy, claimed that Hanoi's attitude had clearly hardened in the previous few months.[119] Holyoake also said that the joint increase with Australia reflected "certain of the realities of our international position - the closeness of ties between us, the increasing need for us to be associated in practical ways, and our growing sense of common purpose in the search for international peace and security".

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[116] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 353, p3681, 26 October, 1967

[117] Ibid., p3704

[118] Ibid., p3713

[119] *E.A.R.* November, 1967, p12

Just before President Johnson unilaterally suspended the bombing of the southern half of North Vietnam on March 31, 1968, the Australian Minister of External Affairs, Hasluck, had made a speech saying that such a suspension would shake the faith of the South Vietnamese in their allies.[120] The New Zealand Minister of External Affairs, in contrast, was enthusiastic about the American move. Holyoake said:

> "I welcome unreservedly President Johnson's decision to suspend the bombing.."[121]

He went on to say that the partial suspension came after a series of statements by the North Vietnamese indicating that if the bombing were halted, negotiations would take place. In fact, the North Vietnamese had only been reiterating their position of the previous year, which had been interpreted by the Americans as that negotiations *might* take place if the bombings stopped. Holyoake was willing to take a more positive view of North Vietnamese intentions than the Americans.

As a result of the bombing pause, peace talks began in Paris in May, 1968.

In February, the New Zealand Ambassador to the United States had conceded to an American audience that the New Zealand presence in South Vietnam was designed to take some of the domestic and international heat off the American government for its actions there.

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[120] Bull, H. "Australia and the Great Powers in Asia", p347, in Greenwood, G. and Harper, N. (eds.) *Australia in World Affairs 1966-70*

[121] *E.A.R.* April, 1968, p37

F. Corner admitted that the United States provided the only effective strength for the preservation of the governments of South-east Asia, but he said that Australian and New Zealand contingents were necessary comestic aids for the American presence.

> "A day will come, we hope, when the countries of South-East can cope with pressures to the north. But until that day comes, they depend on some backing from outside their immediate region. At present, only the United States, Australia and New Zealand can provide that backing. There are certain objections, both domestic and international, to the United States acting alone."[122]

In October, 1968, the Prime Minister went to the United States, and while there he urged the American President to halt completely the bombing of North Vietnam, as an aid to the success of the negotiations. In early November, on the eve of the American Presidential elections, Johnson did this. Holyoake welcomed the decision "unreservedly", saying that he regarded it as a major step towards peace.

> "I have always acknowledged that a total suspension of the bombing could be a critical element in bringing about negotiations. I reaffirmed this in my conversations with the United States and South Vietnamese leaders, and suggested that the time could well have come for such a gesture".[123]

The North Vietnamese, however, did not respond sufficiently for allied purposes to American and South Vietnamese peace proposals put forward in the first part of 1969.

In June, 1969, the new American President, Nixon, announced the first withdrawal of American combat troops from South Vietnam.

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[122] Corner, F. "New Zealand and the United States" in *E.A.R.* February, 1968, p26

[123] *E.A.R.* November, 1968, p22

On his way to the 1969 ANZUS Council meeting in Canberra, Holyoake said he would emphasise at the meeting that New Zealand was anxious that the situation in South Vietnam should be improved sufficiently to allow New Zealand to be able to reduce its military commitment as soon as practicable, but that the government had no proposal for any change regarding New Zealand's forces in Vietnam.[124] The Prime Minister said that the government would consider the question in the light of its own assessment of the takeover capacity of the South Vietnamese and the level of fighting in South Vietnam, and would discuss it especially with Australia. There was no mention of the most important factor: the wishes of the American government. The *Straits Times* suggested that month, that there were indications that the Americans wanted Australia and New Zealand to stay in Vietnam even after large-scale American withdrawals, as a symbolic gesture towards regional co-operation.[125]

At a press conference in Washington in September, Holyoake was prepared to say that the Australian attitude to New Zealand's withdrawal would be a factor in when it was done.

> ".. we could determine [to withdraw] unilaterally, of course. But we would never think of taking unilateral action and it would be in close consultation, and I hope, agreement, with Australia".[126]

During the election campaign of November 1969, Holyoake said that New Zealand hoped to be able to withdraw some of its forces the next year. At this stage, the United States had just announced the

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[124] *E.A.R.* August, 1969, p45

[125] Quoted in Jackson, W.K. "Because it's there ..." *Journal of South-east Asian Studies*, vol. II No. 1, March, 1971, p29

[126] *E.A.R.* September, 1969, p13

second withdrawal of its troops from Vietnam.

On December 16, Australian Prime Minister Gorton announced that Australian units would be included in the next substantial withdrawal of American troops. Holyoake in a statement made on the same day, said that the government was not considering any change in the nature of New Zealand's military assistance to Vietnam. This seemed to indicate that New Zealand forces would not leave with the first Australian units. The continuing American desire for an allied presence may have been a factor.

When United States Vice-President Agnew visited New Zealand in January, 1970, he was asked how much importance he attached to the "continuing presence" in Vietnam of New Zealand troops, and his reply was that he thought it was "very important" that New Zealand felt strongly enough about Vietnam to "exhibit and to continue to display this presence there".[127] The United States, then continued to value a New Zealand presence while there were still substantial numbers of American troops in Vietnam. Holyoake said on this occasion that he had discussed a New Zealand withdrawal with Agnew, and they had agreed that the United States should be able to make substantial withdrawals before other allied troops were moved. In line with this, Holyoake said that if there were further withdrawals after the one scheduled to end in April, then New Zealand would consider whether it should take part of its contingent home.

In April, Nixon announced a fourth withdrawal, to end in the spring of 1971.

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[127] *N.Z.F.A.R.* January, 1970, p11

In August, plans for a New Zealand withdrawal were announced simultaneously with Australia's. Half of New Zealand's infantry force would be out by the end of the year. The Prime Minister said that the government was considering ways in which training assistance could be provided for the South Vietnamese.[128] In November, 1970, the Minister of Defence announced that a 25-man training team would leave for South Vietnam at the beginning of 1971. The training team was regarded by the government as

> "helping to maintain a continuing New Zealand presence, and at the same time assisting in the development of South Vietnamese capability",

the meeting of Vietnam troop contributing countries was told by the New Zealand representative in April, 1971.[129] The primary purpose was less training the South Vietnamese than keeping a physical presence as a symbolic commitment to South Vietnam's continued military resistance.

In March, 1971, the artillery battery that had gone to Vietnam in 1965 was withdrawn, and in August, Holyoake announced that the withdrawal of remaining combat forces would be completed at the end of the year.

In late March, 1972, the North Vietnamese launched a major offensive across the Demilitarised Zone, between North and South Vietnam. The American response was to resume air attacks on North Vietnam. New Zealand's government had changed the month before, with Holyoake giving up the Prime Ministership to Marshall and retaining the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.[130] Holyoake's reaction

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128 *N.Z.F.A.R.* August, 1970, p6

129 *N.Z.F.A.R.* April, 1971, p53

130 The Department of External Affairs had become the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the beginning of 1970.

to the American move was, as always, subdued.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs said:

> "In the circumstances it is not hard to see why President Nixon has ordered sea and air attacks on North Vietnam itself".[131]

At the same time, Holyoake applauded the American decision to return its envoys to the Paris Peace Talks, from which it had withdrawn them in protest at the lack of progress.

With the North Vietnamese offensive continuing, the American government took a new step in May by mining Haiphong harbour and bombing that city. These actions called forth an emotional condemnation from the New Zealand Labour Party, but the Marshall government issued a statement in support. Marshall himself seemed rather more enthusiastic for American military policies than Holyoake had ever been. The new Prime Minister said on May 10 that President Nixon had adopted a "bold plan to end the war", and that the new policy had New Zealand's "understanding and support".[132] At the Annual Conference of the Returned Servicemen's Association in June, Marshall reaffirmed the government's support.

> "I make no apology for saying that the New Zealand government supports the decisive action now being taken by the United States to stop the Communist invasion of South Vietnam and to force an acceptable settlement of outstanding issues".[133]

In October, 1972, on the occasion of Kissinger's apparent agreement with the North Vietnamese, Holyoake reiterated the government's acceptance of any peace settlement negotiated between

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[131] *N.Z.F.A.R.* April, 1972, p39

[132] *Press*, May 10, 1972, p1

[133] *N.Z.F.A.R.* June, 1972, p57

the United States and North Vietnam that included the withdrawal of foreign forces allied with the Government of South Vietnam. The Minister of Foreign Affairs conceded that this was despite the fact that the New Zealand military training teams in South Vietnam were there under an agreement with the South Vietnamese rather than with the United States. Holyoake said that a review of the presence of the training teams had been due by the end of the year, anyway.[134]

By the time the National government went out of office on December 5, 1972, no peace settlement had been arrived at in Vietnam, and New Zealand's army training teams were still there.

Conclusion

New Zealand became deeply involved in the fate of the Republic of Vietnam during the nineteen-sixties because her premier ally, the United States, had chosen to make its major commitment in South-east Asia there.

In 1950 New Zealand had recognised the Associated State of Vietnam as a sovereign entity, and in 1954 had declared itself interested in the preservation of the Geneva settlement on Indo-China, which divided the territory of Vietnam de facto into Communist and non-Communist states. When the North Vietnamese stimulated and assisted an insurgency in the south after 1960, New Zealand expressed concern, but showed little enthusiasm for any military involvement, true to her traditional approach to Indo-Chinese matters. In 1962, when Australia offered to send a team of Army instructors to South Vietnam to complement the American military assistance programme there, New

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[134] *N.Z.F.A.R.* October, 1972, p66

Zealand's Prime Minister thought first in terms of increased Colombo Plan aid as a New Zealand contribution. When the South Vietnamese specifically asked for army instructors from New Zealand in late 1962, the government was cool to the idea. It was not until after the ANZUS Council of 1963 that New Zealand, under American pressure, agreed to provide some military aid. On this occasion, the Prime Minister emphasised that the South Vietnamese had to win the conflict themselves. Later he was to virtually admit that New Zealand's offer sprang from a need to express allied solidarity rather than from any understanding response to a South Vietnamese request. New Zealand delayed implementing its decision for a year, excusing itself by reference to the priority of Malaysian aid and the instability of South Vietnam. Additional American pressure in early 1964 led to a commitment of engineers that year, but in a non-combatant role. The government was careful to stress this status. Once again, the Prime Minister admitted that it was the SEATO meeting's decision, and not the request of the South Vietnamese which had followed the meeting, that had been the main prompt to action.

Late in 1964 and early in 1965 the American government proposed a dramatic escalation of the war, first by a bombing campaign over North Vietnam and then by the commitment of combat troops to South Vietnam. New Zealand was not keen on either step. The government believed that the introduction of ground forces could not retrieve the situation in Vietnam by itself, since part of the problem was in the South Vietnamese government's ineffectiveness. Further, it believed that the introduction would change the nature of the war and thereby intensify it.

New Zealand was first requested to provide troops in December, 1964 and agonised over the decision for five months. Despite the

government's preference for a political solution to the war, the needs of the alliance had priority. The die was probably finally cast when Australia offered to send troops in April, 1965. New Zealand's disloyalty would be spotlighted if it held out after that, and relations with Australia, too, would have been impaired, as Australia believed that it was protecting some vital national interests by being in Vietnam.

In their defence of the small military commitment in Parliament, government Ministers emphasised the belief that New Zealand was paying an insurance premium on American protection by its contribution. New Zealand had to show that she was not just a consumer of security, but a contributor to international security. The constant theme from the 1950s was reiterated: that New Zealand had to earn her protection, by acquiescence in the major policy lines of its great allies. New Zealand policy-makers had a fear that unless the United States were encouraged in its defence of the South-Western Pacific by the loyalty of its allies, it might return to a sort of isolationism that would leave New Zealand prey to the perils the Pacific was heir to. The government seemed acutely aware of New Zealand's weakness and of her lack of strategic value to her ally, which meant that loyalty was all it had to offer to ensure survival. The feeling was made sharper by the perception of a threat from China in South-east Asia.

In its justification of aid to South Vietnam, the government cited many times its concern for resisting an aggressor and upholding a small country's right to self-determination, and its determination to prevent a chain reaction of aggression from destroying its South-east Asian allies. On the other hand, its military contribution

belied the claim that it was making a serious effort at Collective Defence, on the scale it had done in Korea.

It was quite evident that the token force sent to South Vietnam was meant to express symbolic support of the American effort, rather than to help them or South Vietnam in a serious manner. Australia, on the other hand, by introducing conscription for overseas service, was able to send a brigade-sized force to Vietnam (similar in numbers to the force New Zealand had sent to Korea) and make a substantial contribution. New Zealand did not even send the whole of its regular infantry battalion once it was freed from active service in Malaysia.

During the course of the Vietnam War, New Zealand showed that it clung more strongly than Australia and the United States to the idea that the Vietnamese conflict must be settled by a political solution. The government consistently showed no enthusiasm for American initiation or resumption of programmes of bombing North Vietnam, which it believed would make Hanoi more intransigent, and was constantly urging bombing pauses and halts on the Americans. In June, 1965, Prime Minister Holyoake offered to delay the sending of the artillery battery to Vietnam if the North Vietnamese were prepared to negotiate. At the same time he moved beyond the United States in advocating the presence of the National Liberation Front at any peace talks. During all of 1967, the United States was not willing to make a unilateral suspension of the bombing, while New Zealand believed it should in order to get talks going.

New Zealand's Vietnam policy was the classic example, in the period under review, of the influence of the dependence syndrome on policy-making. It was classic because, unlike the case of recognition

of China, New Zealand was not in great agreement with United States policy, but acquiesced into it nevertheless.

CHAPTER 12

NEW ZEALAND, MALAYSIA AND THE BRITISH MILITARY WITHDRAWAL FROM SOUTH-EAST ASIA, 1966-72

Introduction

New Zealand's military involvement in South-east Asia prior to 1969 had been a function of Great Power commitment to the area. New Zealand's role had not been one determined by its direct relationships with the countries of South-east Asia, but by Great Power policies in the region. In 1955 New Zealand had sent troops to Malaya as part of a commitment to Britain; in 1965 it had been the demands of the American alliance that had forced a commitment to South Vietnam. In 1968, when Britain gave notice that it would withdraw militarily from the region by 1971, New Zealand was faced with the problem of redefining its role in Malaysia. The government was asked to continue to support the Malaysian and Singaporean governments militarily after Britain had left. Previously, New Zealand had avoided commitments that were not shared by Great Powers and which did not involve reciprocal guarantees. In 1957, it would not join Britain in a formal guarantee of Malaya.

In 1969, after a considerable delay, New Zealand, together with Australia, decided to keep forces in Malaysia indefinitely after the British withdrawal. In this decision, the government showed that New Zealand's policy of contributing militarily to the maintenance of stability in South-east Asia was no longer completely an adjunct of Great Power policy; that New Zealand now considered that it had a responsibility to contribute militarily in its own right. This was

a decision based purely on New Zealand's regional interest: there was no mention of Commonwealth factors. It is probably going too far to say, as one commentator does: "Unlike Vietnam, this was one policy decision in which New Zealand took an important initiative".[1]

Although desirous of giving help to Malaysia, the New Zealand government did not care to commit itself without Australian participatioon, and the assurance of American backing. Its final decision was made in the knowledge that New Zealand forces would be subject to continuing cover by British power after 1971, even if British forces would not be physically stationed in Malaysia after that date. It is possible that New Zealand's decision was influenced to a degree by the desire to insure itself once again with its major protector, the United States. The New Zealand commitment continued to be a limited one: the government still showed itself reluctant to enter into any firm regional defence treaty with Malaysia and Singapore. New Zealand was wary of departing from its old policy of entering into no formal commitments without Great Power participation. Although New Zealand seemed to enter a new role in South-east Asia, it did not move very far from its previous South-east Asian security policies.

The Wilson Labour government that came to power in Britain at the end of 1964 was determined to reduce defence costs, and late in 1965 the New Zealand government was invited to send a delegation to

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[1] Jackson, W.K. "New Zealand and South-east Asia", *Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies*, vol. IX, No. 1, 1971, p9.

Canberra in February, 1966, to meet the new British Defence Minister, Healey, and to discuss future British defence commitments. Holyoake said at the time of the meeting that New Zealand felt it appropriate to send "a very strong delegation" to Canberra: Defence Minister Eyre; Secretary of External Affairs McIntosh; and Chief of the Defence Staff Thornton.[2] The reason for the strong delegation was the belief that New Zealand's vital interests were in potential danger and that they would need to be fought for. The New Zealand government knew that the British government intended to reduce British defence commitments abroad, but had not decided where the cuts would come. The task of the New Zealand delegation was to ensure that significant reductions were not made in the South-east Asia forces.[3]

On the return of the delegation from the talks, the Prime Minister said that it was clear that a new situation was emerging in which Britain would not be able to police so much of the world, and closer co-operation between Britain, Australia, New Zealand and the United States would be necessary. The Australian and New Zealand delegations had argued, however, that a continuing British presence in the region was essential because the threat to world peace was centred there. They had been reassured that Britain had no intention of withdrawing from its commitments in South-east Asia.[4]

In February, 1966, the British government published a White Paper on defence. It envisaged some reductions in British forces

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[2] *External Affairs Review*, February, 1966, p15

[3] Ibid., p20

[4] Ibid., p20

in Malaysia after the end of Confrontation, but no major withdrawal.

Holyoake commented:

> ".. we particularly welcome confirmation of the fact that the British government has no intention of withdrawing its military facilities from Malaysia and Singapore for so long as the Governments of those ... countries were willing to have those bases on their territories".[5]

Holyoake added that it was basic to New Zealand's thinking that the bases were not there for narrow national [British] reasons, but as part of the wider defence of the free world and more especially of the free countries of Asia.

In July, 1966, New Zealand's Prime Minister repeated to the House of Representatives further assurances that he had had from the British Foreign Secretary, Michael Stewart, that Britain would keep substantial forces in Malaysia. The New Zealand government regarded Britain's continuing presence as not only promoting stability in Asia, but as an indication that it was able to come to New Zealand's defence if need be.

> "Mr Stewart also made it clear that there can never be any doubt of Britain's readiness ... to help defend Australia and New Zealand if the need arises at any time in the future".[6]

Nevertheless, the government continued to be worried about the British government's intentions. When Holyoake met the new British Foreign Secretary, George Brown, at the 1967 SEATO conference, he

> "took the opportunity to stress ... the vital contribution the British forces are making towards peace and stability, particularly in the south-west part of South-East Asia.. I left Mr Brown in no doubt of the importance that we, the government and people of New Zealand, attach to the military presence of Britain in that area, and to her continuing to play her traditional part.."[7]

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[5] *E.A.R.* February, 1966, p32

[6] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 347, p1166, 6 July, 1966

[7] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 350, p667, 18 May, 1967.

The government's senior Whip, J.R. Harrison, told Parliament in May that he had seen a report by the defence correspondent of the *Observer* that Britain was planning to withdraw all its troops from Malaysia by 1976, and that if this were true,

> "a far greater effort in manpower and material will be required of New Zealand and Australia in defending this area of South-east Asia and ourselves".[8]

Harrison immediately assumed that New Zealand would continue to participate in the defence of Malaysia - Britain or no Britain.

Two months later, in July, 1967, New Zealand's anxiety was proven justified with the release of a further British White Paper on defence. In it, the British government announced plans to withdraw "altogether" from its bases in South-east Asia in the mid-1970s. The precise timing of the withdrawal would depend "upon progress made in achieving a new basis for stability in South-east Asia and in resolving other problems in the Far East".[9]

Commenting on the White Paper, Holyoake said he felt regret that Britain had found it necessary to restrict its historic role in the defence of the Malaysian area, and that he would have preferred that British plans had been based on the continuation of a British presence "for an indefinite period". He professed to find some comfort in the fact that Britain had pegged the timing of withdrawal to the degree of stability in South-east Asia. Holyoake said that the Strategic Reserve had a valuable role in providing "an atmosphere of confidence" in which countries of the region had an opportunity to grow and develop. New Zealand's objective in the area, like Britain's

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[8] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 350, p737, 23 May, 1967

[9] Wilson, J. Harold, *The Labour Government 1964-1970*, p422

was to work towards a South-east Asia of independent, viable and stable states and the Commonwealth presence had been designed solely to serve that end.

> "I confess to some doubts that by the mid-1970s the free countries of South-East Asia will have ceased to feel the need for a friendly military presence, or that Communist China will have ceased to exert a major disruptive influence in the region".[10]

The Prime Minister believed that as long as China continued to support insurgents in South-east Asia, a Western military presence would be necessary to insure against the effects. Holyoake acknowledged that British plans would present Australia and New Zealand with problems, since British logistic support was an important element in their capacity to contribute to the defence of the area. There was no assumption by the Prime Minister that New Zealand and Australia should follow Britain in withdrawing.

Within six months, the situation altered again. Early in January, 1968, the British Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, George Thomson, came to New Zealand and Australia with advance warning of the fact that the British withdrawal would now be made sooner - by the end of 1971. Holyoake warned him of the "marked concern" New Zealand would feel if there were to be "any significant acceleration" of the British timetable as announced in July, 1967. The New Zealand Prime Minister stressed to the British Minister the importance that the New Zealand government attached to the "existing arrangements" for Commonwealth defence co-operation in South-east Asia,

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[10] *E.A.R.* July, 1967, p24

and

> "the particular problems .. [an acceleration] would create for New Zealand and Australia in our efforts to ensure the maintenance and logistic support of the forces we have contributed to the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve".[11]

Holyoake told the press on January 12 that Thomson had not asked New Zealand either to maintain its existing force in South-east Asia after the British withdrawal, or to increase its commitment

> "but I think he is aware that New Zealand will maintain its contribution".[12]

Seemingly casually, the Prime Minister had indicated New Zealand's willingness to maintain a military presence in Malaysia beyond 1971 in the absence of Great Power support.

Despite the government's concern about the proposed British moves, it declined the invitation of Singapore's Prime Minister, Lee Kuan Yew, to send a Cabinet Member to London to plead the Commonwealth case personally with Wilson.

Holyoake said in explanation that no purpose would be served by a visit to Britain at short notice. He told Lee that the New Zealand government would be willing to take part in a conference of the five countries concerned to consider the implications of Britain's withdrawal and to "see in what way we could contribute to the maintenance of the security of South-East Asia in the new circumstances".[13]

Some days later, on January 16, 1968, the British Prime Minister publicly announced the speeded-up withdrawal of Britain's forces from South-east Asia. The next day Holyoake called the decision "a great

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[11] *E.A.R.* January, 1968, p17

[12] *Dominion*, January 12, 1968, p1

[13] *E.A.R.* January, 1968, p18

disappointment for New Zealand". The New Zealand Prime Minister said that there was a vast difference between reducing the size of a contribution of forces and eliminating it altogether. New Zealand had been looking forward to a lengthy run-down of the British presence.[14]

In a February statement on defence policy, Holyoake said that the 1966 British White Paper had promised that base facilities would be maintained in Malaysia and Singapore, and with that situation changed,

> "we ... need to assure ourselves that adequate facilities for support, maintenance and supply will be available in the future for such forces as we might have to deploy in the area".[15]

There seemed to be no political question about whether New Zealand's military role was now an inappropriate one, only a technical one of whether that role could be sustained.

The political aspect of leaving a force in South-east Asia without British backup did have to be considered, however. In February, the government consulted with Australia and several Asian countries about ways and means to preserve the region's stability and security. In particular, New Zealand's Defence Minister, David Thomson [who had replaced Eyre in the portfolio after the 1966 election] consulted, apart from Malaysia and Singapore, Indonesia, Thailand and South Vietnam.

Thomson's consultation took the form of a personal tour of the countries involved, and the visit to Indonesia was apparently to sound out Indonesia's post-Confrontation attitude to the retention of Western

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[14] *E.A.R.* January, 1968, p19

[15] *E.A.R.* February, 1968, p36

forces in Malaysia. Thomson told Parliament in July that he had ascertained in Djakarta that Indonesia had no objections to a continuing ANZAC presence.[16] Neither New Zealand nor Australia wanted to have to defend Malaysia against regional rivals again, but they did want to keep their forces there both as an aid to stability in Malaysia and so as to have a forward base for possible operations against Communists further afield in South-east Asia. Indonesia's positive attitude eliminated one possible constraint to remaining.

Initially, the Australian government's views were also towards keeping the Reserve as an ANZAC force. Australian Minister of External Affairs Hasluck said in Kuala Lumpur on February 7 that an Australian presence would continue after 1971,[17] and at the opening of the 1968 session of the Australian Parliament, the Governor-General, in his speech outlining government policy for the session, said:

> "... it has been made clear to us that the Governments of Malaysia and Singapore wish Australia to contribute towards the stability of the region by maintaining some military presence. Therefore ... my government ... will be prepared to discuss the size and role of an Australian contribution to combined defence arrangements which embrace a joint Singapore-Malaysia Defence effort".[18]

Another political incentive towards retention was the encouragement of New Zealand's protector, the United States. In a speech in New York as early as December 6, 1967 (before the announcement of the accelerated British withdrawal), Secretary of State Rusk had said:

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[16] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 335, pp573-74, 17 July, 1968

[17] Thomson, G.G. "Britain's Plan to Leave Asia - An Uncertain Future for Singapore", *Round Table*, April, 1968, p124

[18] *Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates* (House of Representatives) March 12, 1968, p8

> "Both Australia and New Zealand are assuming growing roles in the East Asian and Pacific Community ... And we look to them to take on greater responsibilities when the British withdraw from Malaysia and Singapore sometime in the nineteen seventies".[19]

On February 2, 1968, Robert McNamara, the American Secretary of Defence, told the United States Senate that the American government would

> "encourage a prominent Australian and New Zealand role and continuing Australian efforts to consult the countries of the region about arrangements that will compensate for the British withdrawal".[20]

McNamara's talk of "compensation" for the British withdrawal suggested that the American government might be interested in New Zealand and Australia boosting their troop strength in Malaysia.

Minister of Defence Thomson, speaking in Christchurch on April 30, 1968, stated that in strategic terms, the British withdrawal would suggest that New Zealand, like Australia, might have to consider some expansion of defence expenditure.[21]

By April, 1968, new external factors had begun to appear that constrained New Zealand's first inclinations to leave a force in Malaysia. The chief amongst these was the sudden uncertainty over the future presence of the United States in Asia that followed President Johnson's announcement on March 31 that he would not contest the Presidency again in the election of that year. Johnson's withdrawal was due to a recognition that he was likely to be rejected by the American electorate because of his Vietnam policies. Johnson's

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[19] *Department of State Bulletin* January 1, 1968, p4.

[20] Quoted in Thomson, G.G. "Britain's Plan to Leave Asia - An Uncertain Future for Singapore", *Round Table*, April 1968, p125

[21] *O.D.T.* May 1, 1968, p3

withdrawal was coupled with a partial bombing pause that led to the beginning of peace talks with the North Vietnamese in May. If the Americans were to withdraw militarily from South-east Asia, then an ANZAC military presence in Malaysia would be a greater risk and lose some of its validity.

Policies of concerned countries in the wake of the British withdrawal were discussed at the ANZUS and SEATO Conferences in April, and it was probably at these that the United States indicated that it was not interested in guaranteeing the security of Malaysia and Singapore. William P. Bundy, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, testified before the Foreign Operations Sub-Committee of the American House of Representatives' Appropriations Committee in May that

> "... we do not intend ... to undertake any new commitments in regard to Malaysia or Singapore to replace any activities undertaken by the British ... we have made it very clear that Australia and New Zealand must play the external role there and that we do not propose to do so".[22]

In mid-June, Holyoake told a Wellington press conference that he had raised the question of American backing for Malaysia and Singapore in Kuala Lumpur,

> "as we've realised that any contribution made by us is only credible if in support of a larger power".[23]

The military complex that New Zealand had contributed to in the past had been made credible by the power of Britain.

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[22] Quoted in McDougall, D. "The Evolution of Australia's Defence Policy in relation to Malaysia-Singapore 1964-71", *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, March, 1972, p105 footnote 58.

[23] *O.D.T.* June 17, 1968, p1 (Wgtn-P.A.)

> "Now with Britain retiring as a physical presence it would be well if we had another major power - and in this respect I am talking of the United States".[24]

The Prime Minister indicated that he did not think much of the prospects of an American guarantee of Malaysia, and said that

> "in the meantime, New Zealand would have to keep its options open in an endeavour to ensure that the strongest power in Asia - the United States - would have a continued and perhaps expanding interest in ensuring security and stability right across the South of Asia, instead of just the South-eastern corner".[25]

New Zealand's prime concern, it seemed, was to use its military forces in South-east Asia in such a way as to secure an American commitment to the whole region, rather than just to Vietnam. This might or might not involve a continued stationing in Malaysia.

The dilemma over the degree of American support that the ANZAC countries could expect if they tried to help Malaysia beyond 1971 may have been responsible for the serious doubts that the Australian Prime Minister revealed at this stage about the whole concept of forward defence. At a meeting of the Australian government parties on May 8, Gorton told the Parliamentarians that the established Australian concept of forward defence, "legitimate in its day" might have to be abandoned. In its place, Australia might develop an "Israeli-type defence scheme" of mobile armed forces in Australia supplemented by a large civilian reserve.[26]

The New Zealand government, in contrast, seemed to have no doubts about forward defence: it was only a question of where the

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[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Reid, A. "*The Gorton Experiment*", p55.

military effort would go. In his introduction to the 1968 Annual Report of the Department of External Affairs, Holyoake had said that New Zealand was prepared to participate in further studies of the defence problem in South-east Asia in order to determine how best to make use of New Zealand's military resources in the context both of regional security and the country's close relationship with Malaysia and Singapore.[27]

After the first day of the Five-Power talks at Kuala Lumpur, Holyoake said that New Zealand's decision on a long-term commitment could only be taken in the light of

> "further discussions and other circumstances, including our commitment in Vietnam and the impossibility of prophesying what will be the shape of things in Vietnam in twelve or eighteen months".[28]

The government seemed to be thinking that its ability to contribute forces in direct support of the United States in Vietnam might be more important than maintaining a garrison in Malaysia. In a clash of interest between Malaysia's wishes and those of the United States, the latter's demands would win. Holyoake told the Five-Power conference that any defence contribution to Malaysia and Singapore had to be related to the security and stability of other countries in the region.

> "It must therefore be recognised that there has to be flexibility - that there has to be freedom to move forces within the region depending on the security needs of the region".[29]

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[27] *Annual Report of the Department of External Affairs* 1968, p5, A.J.H.R. A-1

[28] *Otago Daily Times*, June 12, 1968, p1

[29] *Otago Daily Times*, June 13, 1968, p6

The government wanted to avoid a defence agreement with Malaysia and Singapore that would tie New Zealand forces to those countries at the expense of the wider interests of the region and New Zealand's foremost ally.

Education Minister Kinsella, filling in for Defence Minister Thomson at an ex-prisoners of war conference in early June, said that in approaching the problem of continued commitment to Malaysia the government had to keep in mind many important considerations,

> "Including continued active participation in regional cooperative arrangements for which there would be no lessening of need".[30]

The government was unwilling to make a bi-lateral commitment to Malaysia: its instincts were to keep New Zealand forces committed to a multi-lateral organisation supported by a Great Power - The South-east Asia Treaty Organisation.

The Commonwealth link that had given Malaysia first priority in New Zealand's regional commitments during the first half of the decade was no longer, apparently, very influential as a factor in New Zealand's South-east Asian policy. The wider interests of the region were seen as more important in New Zealand policy now than traditional ties.

The New Zealand government apparently continued until June to cling to the hope that it could persuade the British government to modify its January decision. The Kuala Lumpur Correspondent of the *Far Eastern Economic Review* noted a contrast between the Australian

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[30] *O.D.T.* June 7, 1968

delegation, which, along with the Singaporean one, seemed resigned to the new situation, and the New Zealand and Malaysian contingents, which "still seemed unwilling to accept the *fait accompli* as *accompli*".[31]

Holyoake reminded the delegates at Kuala Lumpur that the 1966 British Defence White Paper had agreed that the principal danger to world peace lay in the Far East, and said that he hoped that exercises apart, "a more continuous and tangible demonstration of concern might be possible, even if on a reduced and token scale".[32]

Commonwealth Relations Secretary Thomson in his speech stressed that the absence of British-based land forces would not weaken the area's security: Malaysia and Singapore would still be protected by Britain's mobile capacity. Obviously directing the point at Holyoake, the British Minister compared the British move to the withdrawal of British regiments from New Zealand in the Eighteen-seventies, which, he said, had not left New Zealand any the less secure, since Britain still had her naval power in the area.[33]

The New Zealand Prime Minister did not accept this reasoning and counter-attacked on June 11 with an analogy of his own: the accelerated Roman withdrawal from Britain. Holyoake quoted the Venerable Bede to the effect that once the Romans had shown they were not coming back to aid the Britons, the Picts and Scots speedily returned and, more confident than before, had occupied all the northern and eastern part of Britain.[34] The visible exit of Britain, in other words, might encourage disruptive forces - insurgents - to launch new offensives.

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[31] *Far Eastern Economic Review*, July 11, 1968, p117

[32] *Far Eastern Economic Review* July 11, 1968, p117

[33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid.

Holyoake reported his stance to the House of Representatives in July:

> "One of my central themes was to urge upon the British not only a continuing interest in the defence of the area, which I knew they had, but also a demonstration that they have a continuing interest".[35]

The Prime Minister had argued for retention of a visible British presence.

The Prime Minister did not tell the House explicitly that he had failed in his mission; that the conference had, if nothing else, made it clear that the British government was determined to go through with the withdrawal, but he did say that he had been reassured that a British defence umbrella would continue to be held over the region.

> "I am bound to say that I was impressed ... by the fact that the British will retain what they call a significant capability which can be deployed in South-east Asia".

After speaking of the naval and air capacity of Britain in the region, Holyoake referred to the ear-marked land force "of at least brigade-group size" which he had been assured could be moved out from Britain to Malaysia "at short notice and with considerable speed", and to the promise that Britain would demonstrate this in 1970.[36]

If, then, New Zealand were to retain a presence in Malaysia it would still be under British protection, albeit at longer range.

Holyoake noted that New Zealand and Australia had been criticised for not having made any commitments for the period after 1971, and said that it was as yet too soon for them to do so. The ANZAC governments wanted to know more about the policies of Malaysia and Singapore for their own defence.

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[35] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 355, p552, 17 July, 1968

[36] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 355, p552, 17 July, 1968

> "We made it clear that it was a prerequisite for us, in considering future aid, that they should join together and show that they were determined to have a good substantial defence force of their own".

The two governments concerned had, however, requested a continuing New Zealand presence, Holyoake said.

> "We are being asked to assist with the defence burden .. and I believe that we should".[37]

The reason New Zealand's government felt that it should contribute, was that Malaysia and Singapore presented

> "an outstanding example of stability and order, and of economic, social and political progress in a very much threatened and very troubled and divided part of the world, and we believe that their continued development along the lines that they are following is vital to that part of the world, to democracy generally, and to us here in New Zealand".

Any commitment was no longer to be justified in Commonwealth terms, but in terms of stability in Asia. The values of the Malaysian government were, in the government's opinion, those that best served New Zealand's interests, and New Zealand should therefore defend that government.

> "Viable, prosperous, progressive and democratic countries are important ... to our defence and integrity".

Although no long-term commitments had been made by New Zealand, some decisions had been taken for the future.

> "Specifically I told the conference that New Zealand would continue to maintain roughly the size and shape of the force we have in that part of the world at present; this of course, could be affected by the Vietnam War. I said New Zealand would do this up to 1971 and Australia has said almost exactly the same".

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[37] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 355, p554, 17 July, 1968

On this point, the Prime Minister was a little inaccurate. Australia had promised to leave only her two aircraft squadrons in Malaysia until 1971: there had been no mention of the fate of the ground force.

In his statement, Holyoake had firmly committed New Zealand to leaving its forces in the area until 1971 - a step that Australia still hesitated to make - and gave a strong indication that the government wanted to continue the presence beyond 1971.

In his contribution to the Defence debate, the Defence Minister told Parliament that he believed that an ANZAC military presence in Malaysia "for the time being" would assist those countries in the build-up of their own forces and contribute to the stability of the whole region. Thomson went on to say:

> "It has certainly been made quite clear that our military support is an essential ingredient at this stage in maintaining a strong and stable society".[38]

If New Zealand were sincere in its desire to contribute to maintaining strong and stable societies in South-east Asia, then the decision for after 1971 had been virtually made for it.

When new backbencher E.S.F. Holland had touched on the subject of British withdrawal in the Address-in-Reply Debate in June, he had said that New Zealand had to fill the vacuum caused by Britain's withdrawal, because of her debt to Britain. ANZAM provided New Zealand with a protective umbrella, so New Zealand had responsibilities to it which would be increased by the withdrawal.[39]

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[38] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 355, p336, 10 July, 1968

[39] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 355, p84, 2 July, 1968

One way of ensuring Britain's continued ability to defend Malaysia was to have a continued ANZAC force guarding the necessary bases for reinforcement.

Later, in the defence debate, Holland alluded to New Zealand's acting as a proxy of sorts for an American commitment.

> "We want to give these people the security they want, and I think in this way small nations like New Zealand and Australia can play a significant role and probably be more acceptable to these people than perhaps larger nations like the United States".[40]

In August, New Zealand's policy-makers were presented with a further incentive to keep the presence in Malaysia and Singapore: a declaration by Britain's Leader of the Opposition that a Conservative government would reconsider the whole question of withdrawal from the Far East. Heath said this while in Australia, and repeated it at the Conservative Party's Annual Conference in October.[41]

It was known that elections in Britain would have to be held before April, 1971 - eight months before the withdrawal was scheduled to be completed - and also that the Labour government was at that time very unpopular. There was a good chance that the Conservatives might be returned to power, and some chance that it might happen in time for the withdrawal from Singapore and Malaysia to be reversed.

In October, 1968, the New Zealand Prime Minister visited the United States and Asia. Holyoake told Parliament on the eve of his departure that one of the subjects he would discuss with President Johnson would be New Zealand's reactions and likely intentions in the light of Britain's impending military withdrawal. In an address to

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[40] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 355, p568, 11 July, 1968

[41] *Far Eastern Economic Review*, September 26, 1968, p629

the Australia-America Association in New York, Holyoake implied that New Zealand forces would stay on after 1971 in Malaysia. The Prime Minister said that the British withdrawal posed a practical problem for New Zealand of

> "finding a new basis for our operations in the area in co-operation with our friends from Malaysia, Singapore and Australia".[42]

It also posed a political problem, "for a stabilising influence is being removed together with important reserves of understanding and experience". Later in his speech, the Prime Minister stated that a turning away by those who had already contributed greatly to the welfare of the people of Asia could plunge the region back into confusion and despair. "The need now is for a sustained effort in aid, support and partnership".

The communique issued at the conclusion of the Prime Minister's meeting with the President stated that the two "recognised that the decision of the United Kingdom to withdraw its military forces increases the need for co-operation among the countries of the area".[43] The countries of the area included New Zealand and Australia.

Calling at Hong Kong on his way back to New Zealand, the Prime Minister stressed that, irrespective of New Zealand's future commitments to the American effort in South-east Asia, there would be a "lessening of military capacity" rather than an increase of burden for New Zealand in the Singapore-Malaysia region after the withdrawal of British troops in 1971.[44]

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[42] *E.A.R.* October, 1968, p25

[43] Ibid., p41

[44] *Far Eastern Economic Review*, October 31, 1968, p228.

In this statement the Prime Minister indirectly indicated that, however small, New Zealand would have a military force in Malaysia after 1971. Holyoake seemed to be envisaging a gradual rundown in New Zealand's military presence to complement an increasing Malaysian capacity for self-defence.

Although it seemed that New Zealand wanted to keep some forces in Malaysia after 1971, the decision in Canberra was of vital importance in this.

The Australian government was still equivocating in late 1968 - or at least Gorton, the Australian Prime Minister, was. It was not until November that Gorton announced that Australian ground forces would stay in Malaysia until 1971, and even then, it was a cautious, qualified decision. The Gorton decision was "in principle", and the Prime Minister explained that it was that way "because before that decision is made with finality, we need to know what assistance and support will be forthcoming from the countries in that area themseleves".[45]

New Zealand had never quibbled about its own intentions up until 1971. Ever since the Kuala Lumpur Conference in June, the government had said that New Zealand forces would stay at least to 1971. The New Zealand Prime Minister felt, however, that the Gorton announcement needed to be followed by a restatement of the New Zealand position.

> "New Zealand has decided to maintain in Malaysia forces at about the present level up to the end of 1971".[46]

While still insisting that it was not yet appropriate for New Zealand to make any long-term commitments, the Prime Minister said that New

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[45] *Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates* (House of Representatives) 19 November, 1968, p2983

[46] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 358, p3218, 20 November, 1968

Zealand's basic approach was clear.

> "We have a continuing interest in the stability, security and defence of the South-east Asian area after 1971. There is time enough yet for us to make longer term decisions about the manner in which that interest can best be expressed".

Considering that Holyoake had told the British in June that the best way in which continuing interest could be expressed was by a visible military presence, it was clear what he thought the New Zealand's post-1971 decision should be.

The Prime Minister continued:

> "We shall take our decision after a continuing process of consultation with other governments concerned ... Discussions with other governments have continued since the June talks in Kuala Lumpur. We have kept in close touch with Australia..."[47]

Holyoake's statement had given no clue to the government's attitude towards Australia's caution about making a long-term commitment. That attitude was brought out, however, by Opposition Leader Kirk's reply to the Prime Minister's statement. Kirk said:

> "I ... wish to make it clear that, while there has been some delay in making this announcement, we concede that the responsibility for this delay does not rest on the Government of New Zealand".[48]

By stressing that responsibility did not lie with the Government of New Zealand, Kirk strongly implied that it lay with the government of some other country.

Prime Minister Holyoake shortly afterwards said that he was grateful to the Leader of the Opposition for stating that it was

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[47] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 358, p3219, 20 November, 1968

[48] Ibid.

> "certainly no fault of the New Zealand government that there has been even an apparent delay or hold-up in making these forward decisions".[49]

New Zealand, then, had no doubts to resolve. It already knew what it wanted to do. It wanted to make a post-1971 commitment, but did not want to do it - felt it could not do it - without Australia, and the Australian government was taking its time making up its mind.

In his end of the year review of international affairs on December 28, 1968, Holyoake was still saying:

> "We have not so far found it practicable to make specific decisions about the longer term, after 1971. We shall obviously need to take account of the situation in South-east Asia as a whole. This could be affected by the outcome of the war in Vietnam and by the progress made in South-east Asia towards regional cooperation".[50]

The Prime Minister's linking of the New Zealand decision to the end of the Vietnam War - which had shown little sign of ending, despite peace talks being in progress - suggested that he believed the decision would not be made in the immediate future.

In the latter portion of his statement, however, the Prime Minster clearly indicated which way New Zealand inclined. For the first time in public, he considered and answered the question of whether New Zealand had a role to play in Malaysia once Britain had withdrawn militarily.

> "Do we feel that we were in Malaysia and Singapore just because the British were there and that we automatically leave when they leave? Or do we feel that we have a genuine national role to play and a national interest in the security of South-east Asia?"[51]

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[49] Ibid., p3220

[50] *E.A.R.* December, 1968, p30

[51] Ibid.

The Prime Minister then answered himself unequivocally:

> "I believe we have a role to play that we cannot fail to accept".

The natural corollary to this conclusion was left unstated: that New Zealand would not leave automatically when the British did.

Holyoake continued:

> "Our long-term national security can be affected by what happens in South-east Asia. It is right, and in our interest, to do what we can to help promote security there".

The Australian government had made it clear that it was waiting for an expression of attitude from the new American administration before making its decision. The Australian Minister of Defence, Fairhall, had said in the House of Representatives in November:

> "Who can doubt that we depend heavily on what the programme and policy of the United States are likely to be? Who would want to move ahead of the clarification by the United States of its attitudes towards the end of the war in Vietnam, the likely peace that will follow, and the conditions that will prevail throughout South-east Asia and the Western Pacific after the end of the war in Vietnam? These are matters that are quite vital to any consideration of what we ... should do in the South Pacific area. Until these matters are further clarified, we will not in decency be able to sum up the strategic situation ... [and] develop ... a defence policy of real value".[52]

The Republican candidate, Nixon, had been elected President early in November, but was not due to take office until January 20. The shape of his administration's policy was not likely to be known for some time after that. However, other pressures conspired to push the Australian government into a decision before it had consulted the

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[52] *Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates* (House of Representatives) 19 November, 1968, p2953

Americans. The internal political situation was forcing Gorton in the direction of a commitment to Malaysia: his government was dependent on the support of the Democratic Labor Party, which was vociferously in favour of continued forward defence.[53] Then there were pressures from the Malaysians and Singaporeans themselves. The latter were getting very impatient with the delay in the announcement of ANZAC intentions. On January 23, 1969, the Malaysian Defence Minister called openly for an explicit declaration of intent after 1971 by New Zealand and Australia.

> "Malaysia would like to know Australia's and New Zealand's real position on their commitment [to Malaysia] in case of trouble",

said Tun Abdul Razak.[54]

A further pressure could well have been that of the view of the New Zealand government. Having made up its mind long since - without the benefit of knowing American intentions - the New Zealand government was likely to have urged its favoured course on the Australian government. Both the *Bulletin* and the *Economist* were later to claim that Prime Minister Holyoake was one of those who urged Gorton in January to retain forces in Malaysia and Singapore.[55]

It was not until February 25, 1969, that the Australian government finally announced its decision on a post-1971 military stance in Malaysia. The decision was for a continuing commitment. A New Zealand announcement in the same vein was made by Holyoake the same day.

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[53] Reid, A. *The Gorton Experiment* pp188-191

[54] Ibid., p191; see also *F.E.E.R.* March 13, 1969, p444

[55] *Bulletin*, March 8, 1969, p16; *Economist*, March 1, 1969, p28

In a statement to the Australian House of Representatives explaining the Australian government's motives for its decision, Gorton said that Australia could have withdrawn its troops, but if it had done this,

> "we could scarcely expect smaller countries in the region to be encouraged to protect themselves or larger countries outside the region not to be affected in any future decision they might have to make, should the region be endangered".[56]

The Australian government thus admitted that its decision was in part yet another premium on the American insurance policy: an Australian presence in Malaysia would make more certain an American involvement if a threat arose that neither Malaysia nor Australia could deal with.

Holyoake in his statement stressed New Zealand's interest in playing a part in ensuring regional security.

> "It is obvious that a fundamental change in the framework of our operations in South-east Asia is taking place. Nevertheless, the Government believes that we should continue to seek our security with like-minded nations and play our part in collective defence. This is the impulse that has dominated our review of the defence problem".[57]

Holyoake went on to say that New Zealand had had an interest in the security of the Malaysian area since before the Second World War, but up until 1969 "our role has .. so far been expressed within a larger British military presence". Henceforth, New Zealand would have to accept a more independent stance and one that would bring her more directly into cooperation with the countries of South-east Asia.

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[56] *Current Notes on International Affairs* February, 1969, p42

[57] *E.A.R.* February, 1969, p31

Holyoake was careful to point out that New Zealand was not attempting to play the British role - that is, overall guarantor and protector of Malaysia and Singapore: "Our interests and our capacities are different". New Zealand was playing its own role. This role was that of partner of Malaysia, whereas previously New Zealand had been the junior partner of Britain. Holyoake said that New Zealand felt it should play "a part" in the search for regional security in South-east Asia.

The New Zealand Prime Minister did not mention the American attitude as a factor in the decision-making process, as Gorton had, but it was present. *The New York Times* reported that American officials had worked in close consultation with Australia and New Zealand over the security arrangements that were announced on February 25, but had been careful not to appear to be pressuring the two governments into the decision that had been announced.[58] The *Economist* reported that officials in Wellington (presumably from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defence) had asserted that New Zealand had "made up its own mind on the issue without direction from Washington".[59] However, their need to make the assertion showed that they were well aware of what Washington wanted. The United States government saw a continued Australasian presence as lessening the need for a possible unilateral American commitment to the area.[60] The State Department, commenting on the ANZAC decision, said:

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[58] Jackson, W.K. "Because its there ..." *Jnl. of S.E. Asian Studies*, March, 1971, p29

[59] *Economist*, 1 March, 1969, p28

[60] Jackson, Op. Cit., p29, quoting *New York Times*, February 25, 1969

> "The United States welcomes this move as a healthy development in regional defence efforts and one that will strengthen the stability of the area".[61]

In a major review of New Zealand's defence policies made before the Institute of International Affairs in March, 1969, Holyoake denied that New Zealand's interest in Malaysia and Singapore arose out of the British military presence, or the Commonwealth link with Britain: it arose, he claimed, solely from New Zealand's concern with the security of South-east Asia as a whole.[62] The form in which the interest was expressed was less important than the fact of it.

The Prime Minister's claim is belied by the evidence (see Chapters Eight and Ten), but apparently he felt that he had to make it to justify the decision to remain. Without the British military presence or Commonwealth links, New Zealand's interest in Malaysia could be no more or less than its interest in South Vietnam or Indonesia.

The Prime Minister said that after Britain's withdrawal it was hoped that truly regional defence groupings could be created. New Zealand could contribute to the emergence of these by accepting a positive role in Malaysia for itself. The government did not see any wisdom in trying to huddle down in Fortress New Zealand and ignoring the rest of the world. It made greater sense to take a part in helping to shape events.

> "In our judgement, the logic of our position points to a policy of defence cooperation and of a readiness to play a part in South-east Asia ... We are not writing a blank cheque guarantee for other people's security, but we are prepared to make a contribution to regional security".

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[61] *Bulletin*, March 8, 1969, p15

[62] *E.A.R.* March, 1969, p9

Having claimed that New Zealand *could* play a role in South-east Asia independent of Britain, the Prime Minister went on to say:

> "Once it may have made sense to say, 'where Britain goes, we go'. Now, as Britain withdraws from South-east Asia, it makes no sense to say, 'when Britain leaves, we leave'".[63]

The United States, however, was still in South-east Asia, and up to this time had given no indication that under the new Nixon Administration it intended to leave. New Zealand had an interest in a continuing American military presence in South-east Asia, and the government had shown in Vietnam that it was anxious to show the United States that the American policy of involvement was not unsupported. The Malaysian commitment could well have been made less from a genuine desire to play a role in regional security than to satisfy American desire for continuing participation.

After July, 1969, it seemed even more important to New Zealand to consider American needs in Asia. In that month, at Guam, President Nixon enunciated new guiding principles for American foreign policy in Asia, and they indicated that the United States was tiring of its role of militarily containing Communism on that continent. These principles, quickly labelled the 'Nixon Doctrine', were that the United States in the future would seek to avoid direct military involvement in the conflicts of Asia, and would expect threatened countries to provide substantially for their own defence.[64]

It seemed that in the future exposed allies would have to "earn" American support. The Nixon Doctrine gave New Zealand some cause for

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[63] *E.A.R.* March, 1969, p14

[64] See *United States Foreign Policy 1969-70: A Report of the Secretary of State* , p35 and pp36-37

concern. At the ANZUS meeting of August, 1969, New Zealand was apparently seeking assurances that the Nixon Doctrine would not affect the ANZUS Treaty protection for New Zealand.

Holyoake said after the meeting with American Secretary of State Rogers that New Zealand

> "particularly welcomed the assurances of Secretary Rogers that the policies of the new Administration in relation to the Pacific region include a firm commitment to maintain its Treaty obligations towards Australia and New Zealand".[65]

When the Prime Minister journeyed to the United States in September to see Nixon, he was asked whether he saw any role for the United States in the Malaysia-Singapore area. Holyoake's reply indicated that the New Zealand government saw its own presence in Malaysia as predicated on united States involvement.

> "ANZUS ..... applies to the whole of the Pacific area and it has been agreed that Malaysia/Singapore is part of the Pacific area".[66]

In Parliament in the year following the commitment, there were indications from several National members that the Malaysian commitment was linked in some degree with the desire to influence American policy. In the international affairs debate early in 1970, Government Whip Harrison postulated an insurance premium element in New Zealand's actions in Malaysia.

> "The alternatives are either to stay in South-east Asia or withdraw. A withdrawal would hand over that area and South Asia to Communist control. It would also undermine the confidence not only of South-east Asia, but also of Australia and of the United States in New Zealand".[67]

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[65] *E.A.R.* August, 1969, p47

[66] *E.A.R.* September, 1969, p17

[67] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 365, p513, 16 April, 1970

It was thus not only Malaysia's confidence that had to be assured, but that of the United States - the ultimate protector. Harrison went on to say that it was "essential" in view of the British withdrawal and the Nixon Doctrine that New Zealand should strengthen her ties with her "remaining strong friends in the South-west Pacific - the United States and Australia".

The basic insecurity that New Zealand governments have always felt about the American alliance seemed to have been increased by knowledge of the domestic pressures that the American government was being subjected to on its Asian foreign policy. Gair said in the House on April 17:

> "We must do nothing which encourages the tendency towards isolationism in some sectors of American society. We must do nothing in this country to allow the New Zealand people to imagine that they can step back from the mainstream of world affairs and protect themselves behind some Fortress New Zealand or Fortress Australia policy".[68]

New Zealand, then, had to be seen to be pulling its weight to earn support: New Zealanders could not delude themselves that they could opt out of the need for protection. H.J. Templeton, a new government backbencher who had recently been an officer in the Department of External Affairs, made a particularly revealing comment in October, 1970:

> "... In a period of change like the present, the willingness of Australia and New Zealand to maintain forces in the area Malaysia-Singapore could have an influence on the policies of friendly powers out of proportion to the size of the forces".[69]

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[68] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 365, p560, 17 April, 1970

[69] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 369, p4158, 20 October, 1970

In an address to the University of Otago's Foreign Policy School in May on the subject of New Zealand's relations with the United States, W.B. Harland, the head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Research Division, indirectly confirmed that the decision to keep troops in Singapore after 1971 was taken with an eye to keeping the goodwill of the United States.

> "The decision is one that has been warmly welcomed in Washington ... The decision has thus helped to cement our relations with the United States, and to maintain our standing in the eyes of the Administration. So long as we continue to play our part in South-east Asia there is every chance that it will remain sympathetic to our needs and willing to help us where it can".[70]

One scholar, W.K. Jackson, seems inclined to see New Zealand's major allies as the main factor in the decision. Jackson says that New Zealand's interest in Singapore-Malaysia has to be viewed in terms of its relationships with Australia, the United Kingdom, the United States, Japan, Thailand and other countries.[71] He goes on to say:

> "It is ... arguable ... that a particular action in a particular country may appear to be against New Zealand's interest when viewed as an isolated phenomenon, but yet may be considered by decision-makers in a different light when set in perspective of New Zealand's wider international ties and obligations".[72]

There does not seem to be any evidence that in the case of the Malaysian decision the government saw disadvantages to the commitment: throughout 1968 it had shown itself eager to continue a presence, if

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[70] Harland, W.B. "New Zealand's Relations with the U.S.A.". *N.Z.F.A.R.* May, 1970, p14.

[71] Jackson, W.K. ".. Because it's there.." *Journal of South-east Asian Studies*, March, 1971, p26

[72] Ibid.

possible. This does not, however, necessarily invalidate the point that whatever the government's views in local terms, its policy could well have been determined purely by the perceived demands of the American alliance.

Jackson offers one incident to support the suggestion that New Zealand may have been reluctant to continue the commitment: the announcement in early January, 1969, that the ANZAC force would move its base from Malacca, on the Malaysian peninsula, to Singapore. This move, Jackson says, could be seen as a possible indicator of a fear of entanglement in Malaysia's racial problems, and of readiness to make a quick getaway if it should become necessary. The commitment, he says, thus had the hallmark of a half-decision, a compromise.[73]

In fact, however, the move to Singapore was opposed by the New Zealand government. It was made at the insistence of the Australian government and the motive appears to have been purely financial.[74] The vast Terendak camp near Malacca was not considered economically viable after the departure of the British, and cheaper barracks were available in Singapore.

Jackson's suggestion seems, on the surface, to be given some substance by the fact that Australia and New Zealand were unwilling to enter into any binding, automatic commitment to the defence of Malaysia and Singapore. The subject surfaced at the Five-Power Defence talks at Canberra in June, 1969. These talks, a continuation of those of 1968 between Malaysia, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand and Britain,

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[73] Jackson, W.K. ".. Because it's there .." p28

[74] See, for instance, Hawkins, D. *The Defence of Malaysia and Singapore from AMDA to ANZUK*, p36; Josey, A. *Lee Kuan Yew and the Commonwealth*, pp77-78; Fairhall in *Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates* (House of Representatives) 27 February, 1969, p282

were preparing the ground for a substitute for the Anglo-Malaysian Defence Agreement, involving the five concerned countries equally. Australian Minister of External Affairs Freeth said after the talks that the Malaysians

> "would prefer to have us more widely committed than we have been prepared at any time to commit ourselves",

but he felt that the Australian position was well understood and that there was no conflict such as to jeopardise the new security arrangements.[75] There was certainly *some* conflict, though. In his opening speech to the Conference, Australian Prime Minister Gorton had seemed to rule out an Australian commitment to the defence of Sabah, as distinct from peninsular Malaysia.[76] The Malaysian and Singaporean governments, in turn, stated that they could not accept anything less from their allies than full commitment to their defence in case of need. As a result of these attitudes, the decision on a future defence arrangement was postponed until the following year.[77]

A month after the conclusion of the talks in Canberra, the Malaysian Prime Minister declared publicly that Australia and New Zealand had shown little interest in taking up a significant role in the protection of the nations to the north. Tunku Abdul Rahman said that the Five-Power alliance [of Malaysia, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom] was "useless" from Malaysia's viewpoint.[78] On August 14, 1969, Malaysian Defence Minister Razak, speaking in Singapore, said: "We want a firm, unequivocal statement, preferably a

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[75] *Current Notes on International Affairs*, June, 1969, p307

[76] Reid, A. *The Gorton Experiment*, pp290-292

[77] *Far Eastern Economic Review*, July 3, 1969, p5

[78] *F.E.E.R.* August 7, 1969, p311

written agreement, to allay our doubts.[79]

New Zealand's reaction was one of indignation. Holyoake told newsmen in Canberra that he could not understand the Tunku's reference to New Zealand's and Australia's half-heartedness. New Zealand and Australia, he said, had made solid regional commitments for the period before and after Britain's East of Suez withdrawal.[80]

The trouble was, of course, a difference over what a 'solid' commitment was in each party's terms. For New Zealand, the leaving of troops on the Asian mainland, physically unsupported by a Great Power, was a daring enough initiative without a binding formal defence treaty. New Zealand and Australia were still not prepared to commit themselves bi-laterally to Asian countries in security matters. The premise of 1957, when New Zealand had merely associated itself with the provisions of the Anglo-Malayan Defence Treaty because there was no reciprocal guarantee given, was still operative. Only when strong Great Powers giving reciprocal guarantees were involved in Asian security agreements would New Zealand participate.

In June, 1970, the Conservative Party in Britain defeated the Labour government in the General Election, and once again the British presence became a factor in the defence of the Malaysia-Singapore area. For New Zealand, it was a welcome bolster for her 1969 decision. In July, the Prime Minister welcomed the announced early visit of the new British Defence Secretary, Lord Carrington, saying that he greatly appreciated the high priority that Lord Carrington was giving to the question of the defence of Malaysia and Singapore.[81] After Lord

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[79] *F.E.E. R.* August 14, 1969, p392

[80] Ibid.

[81] *N.Z.F.A.R.* July, 1970, p66

Carrington had visited New Zealand in August, Holyoake announced that in the future defence arrangement for Malaysia, New Zealand and Australia would take a more equal role with Britain, rather than acting as junior partners.[82] The British Conservatives were no more eager than the British Labour government had been to continue with the firm commitment of the Anglo-Malaysian Defence Agreement, and suggested a looser political agreement to replace it. This, of course, was very much in line with what New Zealand preferred in the way of non-Great Power regional treaties, but not what Malaysia felt it needed.

In April, 1971, the five countries concerned sent delegates to a Conference in London to hammer out the new agreement. The resulting arrangement was a very loose and qualified commitment. The Ministers declared that in the event of any form of armed attack, externally organised or supported, or the threat of such attack, against Malaysia and Singapore, their governments would immediately consult together for the purpose of deciding what measures should be taken, either jointly or separately, in relation to such an attack or threat. The New Zealand Prime Minister reported to Parliament in November that Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom were concluding separate bi-lateral agreements with Malaysia and Singapore in broadly similar terms.[83]

When Marshall became New Zealand Prime Minister in 1972, there was no change of policy towards Malaysia and Singapore. The new Defence Minister, McCready, visited Singapore in March, and told the Singapore government that New Zealand troops would stay there even if the Australian contingent were to withdraw.[84]

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[82] *N.Z.F.A.R.* August, 1970, p47

[83] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 376, p4321, 4 November, 1971

[84] *O.D.T.* March 15, 1972, p8

Conclusion

The proposed withdrawal of British military forces from Malaysia and Singapore after 1971 forced New Zealand to re-examine its own policy in regard to the stationing of military forces in the area. From the first announcements of British disengagement, government statements revealed that New Zealand saw a continuing military presence in Malaysia as a valuable aid to stability in that country, and that New Zealand's inclinations were to a perpetuation of that presence by itself and Australia. In finally making a decision to leave its forces in Malaysia, New Zealand showed that its security policies in Asia were now not entirely adjuncts of Great Power policies. The New Zealand government was prepared to do what it could by itself to aid the Malaysian and Singaporean governments. On the other hand, New Zealand's policies were not free from Great Power policies, either. Despite its concern for Malaysia and Singapore, New Zealand did not intend to commit itself to them alone, or in any binding way without Great Power participation. New Zealand's decision was made in the knowledge that British back-up power would be available beyond 1971, and that American support would be given. New Zealand's decision was delayed also until the Australian government committed itself. Neither New Zealand nor Australia was eager to move into a "tight" defence treaty with South-east Asian countries without formal Great Power participation. The 1971 Five-Power Defence arrangements reflected this. It is likely that one factor in New Zealand's positive decision - though not the major one - was a desire to ensure further the involvement of its remaining Great Power protector - the United States - in the region. In some ways, then, the decision of 1969 was not as radical a departure from previous South-east Asian policies as it appeared.

CHAPTER 13

LABOUR AND MALAYSIA-SINGAPORE 1967-75: AN INDEPENDENT SOUTH-EAST ASIAN POLICY?

Introduction

In its response to the intensification of the Vietnam War, the Labour Party had denounced the ensuring of stability by military means. In regard to the Malaysia-Singapore area, however, the party was quite prepared to endorse the stationing of New Zealand forces on foreign soil to ensure stability. Labour regretted the British military withdrawal from South-east Asia as much as the National government, and seemed eager to reinforce the ANZAC presence as an aid to the Malaysian and Singaporean governments. The protection of modernising governments from disruptive insurgencies was seen as a legitimate aid to the promotion of economic growth in the area. The Labour Party disavowed any link now between this goal and New Zealand's security. The Labour Party did not envisage New Zealand forces taking part in the suppression of insurgency, but as acting as a deterrent to it and boosting the morale of the host government thereby. If the objectives were shared with the Nationalists, some means to them were not. Kirk as early as 1967 was suggesting formal bi-lateral links with Malaysia and Singapore as regards defence, a policy not favoured by the National government, which preferred the traditional policy of linking formally with South-east Asian countries only in concert with Great Powers. In office after 1972, the Labour Party was also prepared to contribute to Singapore's defence without Australian support, a policy rejected by the National Party government

in 1968. In approach to policy implementation, Kirk put New Zealand on an independent path, but his actual policies were basically a continuation of those of twenty years before.

The Labour Party's reaction to the 1967 announcement of Britain's withdrawal from South-east Asia was, like the National Party's, one of regret. Defence spokesman Faulkner said in the House of Representatives in May that "nobody in the country" could be happy at the proposal of the British government to withdraw militarily from South-east Asia.

> "It is not merely a question of military defence, but also of Britain's skill and experience, and the trust for British people among those in this area. The stability in the area that this means is of very great importance, both to that area and to us down here in New Zealand".[1]

Faulkner's view of what ensured stability, as well as his conviction that stability in the area was important for New Zealand, showed that he shared the basic strategic assumptions of National Party policy. As Faulkner saw it, New Zealand had to take every care to ensure that it made no decision that could "confirm and hasten" the withdrawal of British influence in South-east Asia. Specifically, he referred to the run-down of New Zealand's contribution to the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve to provide a force for Vietnam. (In March, 1967, after the end of Confrontation, one company from the New Zealand Infantry Battalion stationed in Malaysia had been sent to Vietnam. See Chapter 11, p.444).

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[1] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 350, p721, 19 May, 1967

> "My fear is that, for no real military gain, the transferring of some of our forces from the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve will strengthen the argument of the people in the United Kingdom who want their troops and British influence removed from that area".

Faulkner claimed that if Britain did go through with its withdrawal, "it will cost New Zealand a great deal more to have the same degree of security she enjoys at present". The implication was that New Zealand would have to increase its forces in Malaysia.

Party Leader Kirk reiterated Faulkner's fear in October, after a further infantry company from the battalion had been sent to Vietnam. The battalion was then at half normal strength.

> ".. let me suggest that if the Government is anxious to keep Britain in Asia - and it should be - a very good starting point would be the maintenance of the agreement it made with Britain in that respect, instead of dismantling this arrangement prematurely".[2]

Kirk claimed that by depleting the Strategic Reserve, the government was encouraging Britain to proceed with her plans to leave Asia.

> "We are in fact saying to Britain: We no longer need you there; we are prepared to withdraw from the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve".

Kirk said that if the United Kingdom withdrew from South-east Asia, the American situation in that region would become completely untenable: the United States would not be able to maintain its military presence in that part of the world, and the whole balance of power would shift in consequence. He concluded:

> "From New Zealand's point of view, the maintenance of the United Kingdom's military presence in that area is of vital importance".

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[2] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 353, p3679, 26 October, 1967

Nevertheless, Kirk had already begun to formulate Labour's view of what New Zealand's response to a British withdrawal should be. In May, 1967, he said that New Zealand had to seize the responsibility and initiative in providing for the maintenance of peace and stability throughout the area that most vitally affected it, and suggested the formation of new pacts of regional defence and treaties of mutual assistance between the countries of the region and New Zealand and Australia. Kirk looked forward to

> "the banding together of the small countries in pacts and treaties of mutual assistance which require us to accept responsibility for assisting in their defence".[3]

In August, in the Supply debates, Kirk raised the matter again. New Zealand, he affirmed, had a responsibility to contribute to the stability of South-east Asia, but no greater or lesser responsibility than that of the countries situated there. New Zealand should start to investigate and carry forward the idea of concluding arrangements with countries such as Malaysia and Singapore that would involve them in providing more manpower for the stabilisation and defence of the region, even if it meant assistance with equipment from New Zealand.[4]

The announcement of the accelerated British withdrawal came while the Leader of the Opposition was in the United Kingdom. From Scotland it was reported that Kirk had described British Prime Minister's statement of January 16, 1968 as "extremely disappointing". It was a matter of serious concern to New Zealand, he said, that circumstances had not permitted a substantial revision of British policy.[5] Kirk's reaction was very similar to Holyoake's, since the

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[3] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 350, p673, 18 May, 1967

[4] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 352, p2138, 8 August, 1967

[5] *Dominion*, January 19, 1968, p1

Labour Party as well as the National Party wanted an indefinite British presence in Malaysia.

Some days after his initial statement on the Wilson announcement, Kirk, from London, outlined the New Zealand Labour Party's policy response to British withdrawal. New Zealand should stay on militarily in Malaysia after 1971, but seek to have the British contribution replaced by Malaysia and Singapore themselves, or by Australia. Kirk said that diplomatic initiatives should be taken with the objective of maintaining an allied ground force of brigade strength at Terendak, the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve's base camp.[6] New Zealand should be immediately seeking a conference with Australian, Malaysian and Singaporean government representatives to discuss the formation of a new army unit in the place of the Commonwealth Brigade when it was disbanded in 1971.

> "It should be possible for a brigade to be maintained at Terendak without any great financial burden being placed on New Zealand",

he said.[7] The first step towards this goal would be the recall of the two infantry companies in Vietnam. Kirk believed that New Zealand had an interest in Malaysia's security and that that security was being undermined by British decisions. New Zealand should therefore withdraw from Vietnam to protect its Malaysian interest.

> "Security arrangements for Singapore and Malaysia should have first call on New Zealand's military forces. New Zealand's immediate needs made it doubly desirable to treat the situation in Singapore and Malaysia as one demanding urgent priority rating far above the Vietnam conflict",

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[6] *Dominion*, January 29, 1968, p3

[7] Ibid.

he said. Kirk also looked towards a new formal security pact with Malaysia and Singapore as part of a new regional defence grouping that he hoped would replace the South-east Asia Treaty Organisation. The new British policy had made SEATO more ineffective than before.

> "There are now opportunities for the establishment of new regional groupings and treaties of friendship and mutual assistance between small countries in the South Pacific and South-east Asia which hold valuable prospects for the future".[8]

After leaving the United Kingdom, the Opposition Leader called at Singapore for discussions with Lee Kuan Yew.

In February came the Tet offensive in Vietnam and the resultant American moves to reconsider their involvement: the bombing halt, the standing down of President Johnson, and the entering into peace negotiations.

When the Labour Party's annual conference came around in May, 1968, Kirk and the party leadership had to face down a remit that would have prevented a Labour government sending troops to Malaysia after British withdrawal from the area. The conference had already voted against a continuing New Zealand membership in the South-east Asia Treaty Organisation. Dr M.E.R. Bassett, the Chairman of the Auckland Regional Council of the party, proposed that the party oppose any extension of New Zealand's commitment to Malaysia and Singapore beyond 1971. It took what the correspondent of the *Otago Daily Times* described as a "last-ditch" stand by Kirk and Sir Walter Nash to prevent the passage of Bassett's remit.[9] In his speech the Labour leader said: "This is the last thing we ought to do".[10] He

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[8] *Dominion*, January 29, 1968, p3

[9] *O.D.T.* May 9, 1968, p5

[10] *O.D.T.* (parliamentary reporter) May 13, 1968, p4

emphasised New Zealand's responsibility to the Social Democratic states of Asia, such as Singapore. Was the Labour Party to desert them, he asked?[11] Following Kirk's speech, the conference rejected the Bassett remit by 385 votes to 221.

It seems, however, that the strength of grass roots party feeling at the party conference had an effect on some members of the parliamentary party, for by the time Parliament reassembled a month later, in June, the party line appeared to have been modified from the Kirkian enthusiasm for commitment.

Labour, it seemed, was against an increased New Zealand contribution, and for a phased withdrawal of New Zealand's forces. Faulkner, the Front-bench defence spokesman, said in July, 1968:

> "While Singapore and Malaysia are undergoing this rather painful period of readjustment from both an economic and a security point of view, I believe we ought to stay there, but not in any increased numbers".

In principle, however, he was for withdrawal.

> "This is not the time for us to suddenly call all our troops back from Malaysia; it is a time for us to .. do it by arrangement and by planning. Let us ... tell these people that there is a time limit to our presence there. Surely we do not want to have New Zealanders overseas indefinitely. If these people want their independence, ... then a part of it is gradually to accept responsibility for meeting their own security requirements. Let us help them to do all those things, and then let us get out and come back to defend our own country".[12]

Faulkner now seemed to be all for a 'Fortress New Zealand' concept. New Zealand's presence in Malaysia was valid only in a British context. He saw that context as having outlived its usefulness. Who, he asked, was likely to attack the Malaysians?

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[11] Rowlands, M.C. "The 1968 Labour Party Conference", *New Zealand Monthly Review*, June, 1968, p6

[12] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 355, pp557-558, 17 July, 1968

R.J. Tizard, the party spokesman on finance, questioned that there was any vacuum to fill, and that the British were a necessary part of the South-east Asian scene. He also believed that plugging the British gap was much beyond New Zealand's resources.

> "If we realise that Britain is going for economic reasons how much more futile is it for us to talk of New Zealand, or New Zealand and Australia, stepping in to fill this so-called vacuum?"[13]

P.A. Amos agreed:

> ".. it is quite obvious that it is impossible for Australia and New Zealand to take over the role that has been played by Britain over the centuries; and to suggest that we could even partly do that would be totally unrealistic".[14]

In November, in Parliament, when Holyoake reiterated that New Zealand would leave its forces in the region until 1971, Kirk said that he would like to make it clear that the Labour Party welcomed the statement that the Prime Minister had made.

> "We believe that, as a Commonwealth country, we have a duty to Malaysia and the adjacent country of Singapore that transcends any commitments we may have in other areas in South-east Asia. For this reason, we welcome the decision to maintain roughly a similar contribution to that we have been making over the years in Malaysia, up to the end of 1971. I would say too that, as far as members on this side of the House are concerned, we hope it is possible to arrive speedily at a firm plan as to the nature of developments after 1971 .."

Kirk went on to say that he assumed that it was purely an interim decision not to restore the battalion to full strength in Malaysia, and that after the Vietnam War had ended - supposing that to be sooner than 1971 - the part of the battalion in Vietnam would be restored to Malaysia.[15]

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[13] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 355, p563, 17 July, 1968

[14] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 355, p571, 17 July, 1968

[15] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 358, p3219, 20 November, 1968

In February, 1969, came the decision by the government to retain New Zealand's forces in Malaysia after 1971. The Labour Party's reaction was one of approval. The Leader of the Opposition said on March 8 that there were good reasons for continuing to lend a helping hand in Malaysia and Singapore, and that the decision to keep limited forces in the area at the pleasure of those countries was "sensible in the circumstances". Kirk's criticism was that New Zealand should have decided, as well, to apply itself more diligently and effectively to constructive assistance that would promote development and stability, so that "conditions can eventually be created which would make it unnecessary for New Zealand's military forces to be stationed in those countries".[16]

In May, 1969, however, there were race riots in Kuala Lumpur, which led to a good deal of uneasiness in the party. Faulkner in Parliament in June expressed the worry that the presence of Commonwealth troops in Malaysia might be encouraging the Malaysian government to resist measures of reform. He urged the Prime Minister to make it very clear to the Malaysian government that New Zealand troops would not be used in internal disorders.

> "Do not let Malaysia and Singapore think that they will be, because the possibility exists that if they think they will be propped up by our troops, they will ignore their duty as Governments to their people".

Faulkner was all for leaving the Malaysians alone to work out their own destiny. He predicted that there would be a struggle between the poor majority in Malaysia and those who had become affluent at their expense, and feared that New Zealand troops could get mixed

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[16] *Dominion*, March 8, 1969, p2

up in it. This new, harsh view of Malaysian society was in complete contrast to Holyoake's claim that Malaysia was a model of stability and social progress which New Zealand had an interest in preserving.

Faulkner declared:

> "... there should be a steady reduction of our forces and the training of additional Malaysian replacements to look after their own security".

New Zealand, however, should provide the money for these replacements, because economically a great burden would be transferred to the Malaysian government. Labour's defence spokesman finished by attacking the Prime Minister for not mentioning an end to New Zealand's military presence, and by warning the Malaysian government to put its house in order.

> ".. Malaysia and Singapore should understand that while we want to be friends with them ... they must measure up in seeing that their wealth .. is shared among all their peoples .. Until they measure up to this basic British concept .. they cannot expect and ought not to expect support from New Zealand forces to prop them up".[17]

The party's Justice spokesman, A.M. Finlay, noted that the Malaysian government was trying to explain away something of entirely internal origin as something externally instigated, not for the first time. Finlay said:

> "I should like to see us, as a condition of our even remaining there, make a requirement on the current regime in Malaysia that it will give proper representation of all spheres of life - economic, political, and others - to the races as they are divided in that land".[18]

He reminded the Prime Minister that he, Holyoake, had stated earlier in the year that there was no question of the involvement of New Zealand security forces in internal security problems, and that the Leader of the Opposition had gone on record as supporting that statement.

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[17] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 360, pp538-539, 4 June, 1969

[18] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 360, pp559-560, 4 June, 1969

The following day Finlay accused the Government of Malaysia of having developed a dangerous persecution complex. He said that in his view the repressive policies of that government were more likely to cause problems of civil strife than prevent them as the Malaysian government claimed.

> "It is well-known, of course, that Communists, and particularly the Chinese Communists, are not averse to fishing in troubled waters, and they could create the very evil that the Tunku is pretending to combat at present".[19]

Labour's spokesman on Agriculture, W.E. Rowling, stated that New Zealand had a real concern that her troops were in the midst of a steady worsening Malaysian domestic situation, with no indication of their role if the situation came to a climax. In the same speech, however, Rowling also harked back to the old Labour theme of leaving Malaysia in the lurch by despatching troops to Vietnam.

> "What will the people of Malaysia think of us if we are unable to fulfil our obligations as a result of the dispersal of our limited military resources?"[20]

Rowling's speech indicated two conflicting strands in Labour's thinking about the Malaysian commitment: the traditional desire to support a Commonwealth ally set against a deep suspicion of backing an undemocratic government.

This was the first time that Labour leaders had publicly questioned the substance of the Commonwealth obligation. Malaysia was no longer, it seemed, worthy automatically of New Zealand support because it was a 'British' country. The race riots had pushed some

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[19] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 360, p590, 5 June, 1969

[20] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 360, p617, 5 June, 1969

senior Labour members into publicly accusing Malaysia of not practising the Commonwealth ideals of democracy.

In July came the announcement of the Nixon doctrine, which formed the background for a Kirk call the next year for a reappraisal of New Zealand's policies. In Parliament in April, 1970, the Labour leader stated that withdrawal of both Britain and the United States from South-east Asia would mean a change in the balance of power in that area, and that that, in turn, would mean a fresh look at New Zealand's policies. Kirk did admit to continuing to support the interim retention of those forces.

> ".. much as we support the retention of some New Zealanders in that area, we would be extremely unrealistic not to realise that the decision of a single friend" - [presumably Malaysia] - "some time in the future could even radically change the policy".[21]

Faulkner in this debate wanted New Zealand to make provision for eventual withdrawal, reiterating his position of the previous year.

> "I am one of those who believes that these countries have to be informed that in due course we expect our troops to be brought home to defend New Zealand, and that they must get to a stage where they can look after their own security.."[22]

The Defence spokesman said that the troops were in a very dangerous situation while they continued to be stationed in Malaysia. C.F. Moyle agreed.

> "Militarily, our forward presence in South-east Asia should be a reluctant one, a temporary situation to be ended as soon as Malaysian and Singaporean capability enables our withdrawal to be carried out without endangering the security or stability of our South-east Asian partners. I believe New Zealand's defence forces should be totally domiciled at home, and that our overseas military commitments should be restricted to defensive alliances of immediate application to New Zealand.."[23]

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[21] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 365, p504, 16 April, 1970

[22] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 365, p511, 16 April, 1970

[23] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 365, p549, 17 April, 1970

The strongest statement on the subject was made, perhaps inevitably, by a backbencher, J.L. Hunt. In his list of policies for New Zealand in the nineteen-seventies, he said New Zealand should abandon its idea of forward defence in Malaysia and Singapore by phasing out the troop presence there in the next two or three years. New Zealand could not be defended any more effectively from Singapore than it could from its own shores. Malaysia and Singapore, he said, were independent countries and should work out their own future.[24] Hunt did not seem to be as concerned with the fate of the Malaysian and Singaporean governments as some of his colleagues. New Zealand, in his view, had no role in stabilising Malaysia.

The question of the withdrawal of troops from the region reappeared at the Labour Party conference of May, 1970. Hunt moved that the party pledge to negotiate for a withdrawal of troops when it became the government in 1972, but this remit was rejected. In presenting his motion, Hunt said:

> "I feel this remit needs to be carried. If a bush-fire [sic] war developed ... and New Zealand was asked to supply troops, we would be putting troops in an area where they would not be wanted".[25]

Hunt seemed afraid that New Zealand could find itself eventually in another Vietnam situation - with its troops aiding the status-quo faction in a Civil War. The Malayan emergency could well break out again on a bigger scale. Hunt's view was supported at the conference by the framer of the 1968 Malaysian remit, M.E.R. Bassett, who said that by having troops in that region, New Zealand could be said to be delving into a domestic situation.[26] In view of the British

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[24] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 365, p566, 17 April, 1970

[25] *Christchurch Star* (Wgtn. reporter) 6 May, 1970

[26] Ibid.

withdrawal from South-east Asia, and American and Australian withdrawal from South Vietnam, New Zealand would be left alone as the sole Western state fighting for local governments.

The conservative view, which turned out to be the majority one at the conference, was put by C.M. Bennett, who had been the Second Labour government's High Commissioner in Malaya. He said that Commonwealth troops had been in Malaya to prevent a Communist resurgence. It had to be taken for granted that Communist threats throughout South-east Asia had to be guarded against.

The troops in Malaysia were there in a peace-keeping role, Bennett said, and their presence was a way of helping fellow members of the Commonwealth.[27]

The conference considered another remit which proposed that a Labour government should not withdraw New Zealand troops from Malaysia and Singapore without full consultations with the governments concerned. The remit also suggested, however, that a Labour government should not keep the troops in the area longer than necessary, and that the position be reviewed and analysed with the governments concerned from time to time. Kirk spoke in support of this motion. He said that if the current treaty with Malaysia were broken - and presumably he was speaking of the formal association with the Anglo-Malaysian Defence Agreement - there would be little prospect of concluding other treaties with that country, and treaties of regional cooperation were a necessity for the future.[28] The remit was passed.

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[27] *Christchurch Star*, May 6, 1970

[28] Ibid.

A month after the conference, in June, 1970, the Leader of the Opposition made a tour of the countries of South-east Asia. On his return, Kirk evinced a tolerant attitude to happenings in Malaysia. He told the parliamentary reporter of the Christchurch *Press* that democracy in Asia was likely to take on an entirely different character from its Western versions. Malaysia's parliamentary democracy had been stable until 1969 because it had not been challenged. The challenge, when it came, revealed that while Western-style parliamentary democracy might be suitable for the United Kingdom and New Zealand, it was not necessarily relevant to a different society. Kirk felt that the governing Alliance Party in Malaysia had a sincere desire to return to democracy in that country. The Leader of the Opposition confessed himself "surprised and relieved to find that Malaysia was racially far more stable than he had thought".[29]

In a report of his trip circulated to fellow Parliamentary members of the Labour Party, the Leader of the Opposition reported that there was a strong desire in both Singapore and Malaysia for the retention of the New Zealand contribution to their defence assistance. Although the New Zealand contribution was not large, he said, tangible benefits were derived from the presence.

> "These forces cannot and will not be used in connection with any domestic trouble and there is no sign of any external situation that would lead to their involvement. But it is not the use that is important. It is the presence. It broadens the relationships between both countries, demonstrates the determination to maintain political stability, and leads to greater confidence and cooperation within the community as well as in inter-country affairs".[30]

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[29] *Press*, July 10, 1970

[30] *New Zealand Labour Party Journal*, November, 1970, p53

Kirk, then accepted the government's rationale for a continuing troop presence.

The same month that Kirk had made his tour had seen a general election take place in Britain, with the return of the Conservative Party to office. The Conservatives came to power eighteen months before the last British troops were scheduled to leave Malaysia, and they immediately instituted a review of the situation. In April, 1971, it was decided that Britain would leave a battalion of infantry in Malaysia permanently, to maintain the Commonwealth Brigade at full strength - three battalions. It was also decided that Britain would come to a new defence agreement with Malaysia and Singapore that would include New Zealand and Australia as equal partners.

Kirk, of course, was in favour of a new agreement, but no details had been settled when the Labour Party convened its fifty-fifth annual conference in May, 1971. Two remits concerning regional defence were presented. Remit 29(b) asked that the party state that no New Zealand armed forces would be stationed on foreign territory in a military capacity except as part of a United Nations force, or in so far as it was directly necessary in the interests of New Zealand's national security, or where it was clearly required under any treaty obligation.[31]

The International and Defence Committee recommended that the conference cut out the middle phrase ["in so far as it is directly necessary in the interests of New Zealand's national security",] but

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[31] New Zealand Labour Party, *Report of the 55th Conference*, p40.

otherwise endorse the remit. The middle phrase deprived the remit of the tightness and meaning it had. In approving the new version, the conference showed itself in favour of withdrawing the New Zealand force from Singapore unless the new agreement made it obligatory that they stay. The Left-wing was not satisfied with this loop-hole, and moved an amendment that no New Zealand forces be stationed on foreign territory in any capacity except as part of a United Nations force. This was lost. The party as a whole was prepared to leave troops in Singapore if the new agreement specifically called for it. A second remit called for a New Zealand withdrawal from all regional military pacts and defence alliances. The conference would not endorse this.

In a speech on foreign policy to the Auckland branch of the New Zealand Institute of International Affairs in June, 1971, however, Kirk cast doubt on the usefulness of the Five-Power defence arrangements to New Zealand. He said that the continuance of any Five-Power arrangement would not be related to New Zealand's needs but to the wishes of Malaysia and Singapore, which could change at any time. In the wake of changes in Great Power relationships with Asia, New Zealand had no effective collective security measures in force, and no alternative policies to fill the gap. Kirk thought that New Zealand should welcome the opportunity provided by the changes to develop new arrangements with Asian countries, based not on collective security, but on regional economic development. To do this, New Zealand needed to demonstrate to Asia its involvement in Asian problems and in Asian affairs.[32]

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[32] Kirk, N. *New Zealand and Its Neighbours*, pp5, 9 and 12.

The new Five-Power Agreement (ANZUK) that emerged in November, 1971 did not oblige the Australasian and British participants to maintain forces in Malaysia and Singapore. The Labor Party in Australia announced that if it came to power it would withdraw Australian troops from Singapore. In a New Zealand Broadcasting Corporation 'Point of View' programme in November, 1971, Kirk was asked by the compere if the New Zealand Labour Party's policy was the same as that of the Australian Labor Party. Kirk said that it was not. He said that the party had said that it would maintain New Zealand's contribution as long as the governments of Singapore and Malaysia desired it, and as long as the presence was of some material benefit in assisting to maintain stability in the region.[33] Stability, it appeared, depended on a climate of confidence which the troops could promote. Their role was likened to that of a policeman on the beat, giving reassurance:

> "... the fact that he's there gives a little more confidence in a situation where relationships on a racial basis become strained".

Because he regarded that reassurance as important, Kirk said:

> "I have no difficulty whatever in accepting that a request from two other Commonwealth countries should be met".

Kirk did concede that he did not regard the arrangement as permanent or long-lasting.[34]

At the 1972 annual conference of the party, in May, Remit 12(e) proposed that the next Labour government negotiate with the governments

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[33] New Zealand Labour Party Research Unit Files - Transcript, 'Point of View' Broadcast, 7 November, 1971, p49

[34] New Zealand Labour Party Research Unit Files - Transcript, 'Point of View' Broadcast, November 7, 1971, p49

of Malaysia and Singapore for a firm date for the withdrawal of New Zealand's armed forces from those countries. The International Affairs and Defence Committee was unhappy with the call for a "firm" date, but apparently eager to endorse the principle of withdrawal. The Committee recommended that the remit be amended to read:

> "that the next Labour government negotiate with the Governments of Malaysia and Singapore for a mutually acceptable date for the withdrawal of New Zealand armed forces from those countries".[35]

In Parliament in August, senior Labour spokesmen followed this line up with an effort to get the government to put a time limit on the presence of the New Zealand force in Singapore. Defence spokesman Faulkner asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs to elaborate on the government's statement that the forces in Singapore were there to assist Malaysia and Singapore achieve self-sufficiency in defence, and to tell the House the expected date of the achievement of that goal.[36] Holyoake replied that there was no target date. Faulkner then made the point that the achievement of self-sufficiency could not be taken as a guide to the time of return of the New Zealand troops in the area.

C.F. Moyle, the party's spokesman on Agriculture, asked Holyoake:

> "Is it not a fact that New Zealand has not intimated in any way to either Malaysia or Singapore any terminating date for the presence of New Zealand forces in that area?"

Holyoake said that that was true.[37]

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[35] New Zealand Labour Party, *Report of the 56th Annual Conference*, p53

[36] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 379, p1413, 2 August, 1972

[37] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 379, p1414, 2 August, 1972

The 1972 election policy manifesto of the Labour Party, released in October of that year, reflected the conference line of fixing a date for the bringing home of the troops, and thus nudged the party's policy closer to that of the Australian Labor Party. The manifesto declared that the party, if elected, would, in consultation with the treaty countries, establish a reasonable date for the return home of New Zealand forces from Malaysia and Singapore.[38]

After the election of the Labour Party to power in November, 1972, the new Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs made it clear in an interview that this date was really dependent on the governments of Singapore and Malaysia. He told the correspondent of the *Wairarapa Times-Age* that New Zealand would withdraw its troops "at a mutually convenient date, and this will revolve around the wishes of those two governments".[39] This casual attitude to the troops in Malaysia was at marked variance with the party's determined attitude towards the army training teams in South Vietnam. One of the new government's first acts in the foreign policy field was to announce the withdrawal of the teams. There was no qualification concerning the wishes of the two governments concerned - Cambodia and the Republic of Vietnam. Faulkner, who was now Minister of Defence, said on December 11 that negotiations were in train to establish dates when the teams could be released from their responsibilities and that it was hoped to have the servicemen back by Christmas.[40] The Minister said that it was no longer government policy to provide military assistance to South Vietnam.

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[38] New Zealand Labour Party, 1972 Election Manifesto, p29

[39] *Wairarapa Times-Age*, December 27, 1972, p13 (In Labour Party Research Unit Files)

[40] *New Zealand Foreign Affairs Review*, December 1972, p35

In the Labour government's first statement of foreign policy aims, issued on December 22, it was declared that New Zealand would henceforth be more self-reliant and pursue a more independent foreign policy.

> "Naturally we shall work in partnership with those who share our aims. But our decisions and actions must be our own. Our policy will be a policy of independence".[41]

The Australian Labor government which had been elected on December 2 was pledged to remove Australian ground forces from Singapore. Although the New Zealand Labour Party's platform suggested that it saw this as an admirable aim, Party leader Kirk had consistently indicated that he was willing for New Zealand forces to remain. The availability of logistical support for the New Zealand force was a factor in its continuing viability, and this, after the British run-down, was supplied by the Australians. Thus with logistical support about to be denied the remaining ANZUK ground force, the New Zealand government had three options open to it in regard to the Singapore force. It could accept the Australian decision as binding on its own and withdraw the New Zealand contingent; it could try and persuade the Australian government to change its mind and retain at least the support elements of the ground force in Singapore; or it could arrange to provide its own supporting forces. The second option was the logical starting point in an independent New Zealand approach to South-east Asia, and the evidence points to the fact that Kirk took it up.

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[41] "New Zealand in the World of the 1970s," *N.Z.F.A.R.*, December, 1972, p12

As one of his first acts in the foreign policy field, Kirk invited Australian Prime Minister Whitlam to confer with him in New Zealand. The Australian Prime Minister duly came over in late January. The official communique issued at the end of the visit conspicuously avoided a statement on the future of Australian and New Zealand forces in Singapore, noting only that the future disposition of the forces had been discussed, and that each government would consult with the other partners in the Five-Power defence arrangements.[42] The two Prime Ministers did, however, acknowledge the importance of maintaining stability and confidence in the area while the countries there were adjusting to the end of the Vietnam War and the change in Great Power relationships.

On February 5, the Australian Prime Minister announced that Australia's 600-man support group would stay in Singapore after the infantry battalion departed in January, 1974.[43]

A London *Times* commentator, Robert Jackson, wrote in March that it was a "striking feature" of the relationship between Australia and New Zealand that in the main areas of divergence between their views, which included the Commonwealth Five-Power Defence Arrangement,

> "Mr Kirk's moderate and pragmatic counsels seemed to have helped win the Australians over from some of the more extreme positions they espoused before and after the elections".[44]

Britain's Defence Minister, Lord Carrington, visited New Zealand at the end of January in an endeavour to persuade the Labour government not to withdraw the New Zealand contingent from Singapore,

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[42] *N.Z.F.A.R.* January, 1973, pp7-8

[43] Camilleri, J.A. *An Introduction to Australian Foreign Policy* p96

[44] *Times* (London), March 27, 1973, p16

and was given the assurances he sought. After two days' discussion with Kirk, Carrington said that Britain intended to continue its current contribution to the Five-Power Defence Arrangement, and "I am delighted to hear that the New Zealand Government intends to do so, too".[45]

Carrington went on to Canberra, where Whitlam was committed to removing the Australian infantry battalion, but tentatively prepared to leave the logistics component that serviced both the New Zealand and British contingents. Carrington publicly warned the Australian government that if this were withdrawn too, Britain would have to reassess its own contribution.[46]

In the middle of February, New Zealand's Minister of Defence, Faulkner, announced formally that New Zealand would maintain at current levels its forces stationed at Singapore.

> "We have now had time and opportunity to consider the views of our partners on the future of our forces in Singapore. We have agreed that the Governments of Malaysia and Singapore welcome their presence and appreciate the assistance they can continue to give during this transitional period in which these two countries are building up and strengthening their own armed forces".[47]

Faulkner made no mention of any intention to settle on a withdrawal date. He went on to welcome the Australian government's decision to leave the forces from all three of its services in Singapore, because it made it easier for New Zealand to maintain its own forces in Singapore. Faulkner's use of the word "easier" indicated that even if the Australian decision had gone the other way, New Zealand would continued to keep its force in Singapore. Australia's decision had

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[45] *Times*, February 1, 1973, p6

[46] *Times*, February 6, 1973, p6

[47] *N.Z.F.A.R.* February, 1973, p31

just made New Zealand's more easy to carry out. The Defence Minister said that New Zealand also "warmly welcomed" Britain's decision to keep forces in Singapore. The Minister's only concession to the future was to say that the presence of New Zealand forces in the region would be reviewed from time to time in the light of local needs and the developing regional situation.

The London *Times* correspondent in Wellington claimed that Faulkner's statement reflected "the success of representations made by Lord Carrington",[48] but it seems more likely that Carrington had been preaching to the converted. The New Zealand government had already declared that it did not intend to be influenced against its interests, and it was the Australian presence, rather than the British, that was the more important to New Zealand's continuing presence. Whitlam's visit in the previous week was likely to have had more bearing on New Zealand's policy than any British pleas. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, there had also been Faulkner's consultations with the Malaysians and Singaporeans themselves.

At the end of March, Faulkner left New Zealand for personal discussions with the governments of several South-east Asian countries. During these talks, the Minister was made aware of the strength of Singaporean desire for a continued Western military presence. The discussions also led the government to adopt a new policy emphasis: a drive to strengthen bi-lateral relations with South-east Asian countries, as a necessary promotion of regional cooperation. In his introduction to the Annual Report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for 1973, Kirk explained the new line. New Zealand, he said, wanted to see new regional arrangements that would unite the people

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[48] *Times*, February 16, 1973

of Asia and strengthen their governments. However, consultations with the governments had shown that they were not yet ready for wider arrangements, and so, for the time being,

> "we are concentrating on strengthening our relations with individual countries in the area, in a way which we hope will strengthen their confidence in the values of regional cooperation. We have met a ready response to our expressed wish for closer bi-lateral relations and shall lose no opportunity of developing them".[49]

In order to promote bi-lateral relations, New Zealand had to acquiesce in what the South-east Asian governments wished of her: the continuing military presence.

The Prime Minister's speech to the Returned Servicemen's Association in June, 1973, underlined the change in New Zealand's policy towards South-east Asia that the Labour government saw itself making. Kirk said that until recently New Zealand in South-east Asia had continued to see itself as essentially a helper - of Britain, the United States or Australia. It had been part of New Zealand's doctrine that her contributions to the stability and development of South-east Asia made sense only in the context of a collective effort - that New Zealand had to belong to a team. However, Kirk said, New Zealand had steadily developed her own contacts with the countries of South-east Asia, and "they have come to value our contributions for their own sake.."[50] New Zealand efforts had come to have more meaning as those of a regional nation than in the context of collective Western efforts.

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[49] *A.R.M.F.A. 1973*, p9, A.J.H.R. A-1

[50] Prime Minister's Address to the Returned Services Association, 12 June, 1973, *N.Z.F.A.R.* June, 1973, p20

New Zealand's interest was in preventing further conflicts in South-east Asia, such as Vietnam and Confrontation, that drew in other powers. Differences between South-east Asian nations could be resolved by closer association and working together. However, since the nations of South-east Asia were suspicious of one another, and especially of China, the only way that regional cooperation between them was going to come about was if they had confidence in the support of friends. Thus, if New Zealand wished to prevent further conflicts she had to help promote cooperation and to do this provide confidence, which meant assuring the South-east Asian countries of support in practical terms.

> "Mr Faulkner's discussions have confirmed that they are all interested in increasing co-operation with us, not only in the fields of economic development, investment, and trade, but also in that of defence".[51]

Kirk said that New Zealand's armed forces had still an important part to play in the area in the furtherance of the long-range goal. Security was a major pre-occupation of all the governments of the area and defence cooperation was therefore of particular importance to them.

> "They see our willingness to maintain forces in the area as evidence that we understand their problems, that we are serious in our desire to help them, and that we are willing to pay a price in terms of public criticism - that we are prepared to stand up and be counted. It therefore makes them more willing to listen to our views, even on questions about which they are very sensitive".[52]

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[51] Ibid., p22

[52] Prime Minister's Address to the Returned Services Association, 12 June, 1973, *N.Z.F.A.R.* June, 1973, p24

The Prime Minister seemed to be suggesting that an added advantage of New Zealand's having a troop presence in Singapore was that it would let New Zealand press effectively for domestic political reform in that country - a point he may have thought would appeal to the left-wing of his own party.

Kirk also said that the Five-Power arrangement, while ostensibly a military arrangement, was a declaration of the support of three nations - Britain, Australia, and New Zealand - for the maintenance of stability, the preservation of territorial integrity and the development of independence. Its value lay not in military forces being employed in some violent capacity, but in that

> "the presence of military forces helps create the climate in which no violent conflict can emerge. Thus it is a political instrument to which the defence services of this country make a remarkable contribution".[53]

The Labour government's commitment to bi-lateral ties in defence, as well as other matters, with Asian countries, and its determination to have its own, independent, policy, in South-east Asia was illustrated in July, 1973, when the Australian government changed its mind under left-wing pressure and announced that withdrawal of all Australian ground forces from Singapore by 1975 would be negotiated. The New Zealand government did not take the chance to similarly negotiate an expedient exit, despite the fact that withdrawal of Australian logistical support would have provided adequate justification. Prime Minister Kirk said that there was no

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[53] Ibid., p23

question of New Zealand forces in Singapore and Malaysia being withdrawn in the near future. Kirk said that the Malaysian and Singapore governments had made it clear that they welcomed the continued New Zealand presence as an instrument to foster stability during a difficult transitional period, and that for its part, the government had indicated that it intended to keep its forces in the area as long as they were wanted by the governments concerned. New Zealand was studying the modifications that would need to be made to logistics arrangements in the light of the Australian programme. In line with "the Government's expressed wish for closer bi-lateral relations with countries in South-east Asia", the command and logistics arrangements would in future "emphasise the national character of our contribution."[54]

A month later, in a further comment on the situation, Kirk said that he thought New Zealand's policy in its relationships with the area was the right one, although he did not mean this as a reflection on Australian policy.[55] While the New Zealand force was a military one, its main purpose was political: "to demonstrate our concern with the political stability of the area". The Prime Minister added that there was evidence from "other countries" that they would be interested in New Zealand's remaining in the ANZUK grouping because of the stabilising effect. Kirk also said that the grouping was the last British presence in the region, and at a time when changes of unpredictable magnitude were taking place in the area, there was "a lot to be said for keeping things on an even keel".[56]

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[54] *N.Z.F.A.R.* July, 1973, p17

[55] *Waikato Times*, August 17, 1973, p3 (N.Z.P.A. Wellington)

[56] Ibid.

The withdrawal of the Australians meant the end of the old ANZUK Brigade, and while touring South-east Asia at the end of 1973 Kirk announced the setting up of an independent New Zealand command. At a State dinner in Singapore, Kirk reiterated that the troops would stay in Singapore for as long as they were wanted, and went on to make the point that New Zealand's interest in the stability of South-east Asia was no longer related to the security threats to New Zealand that could arise from instability. For most of the previous thirty years, New Zealand's leaders had viewed South-east Asia principally as a potential trouble-spot, as a source from which might come a threat to New Zealand's security, he said. New Zealand's government no longer thought in those terms.[57] Stability was now an end in itself - for the benefit of the Asian countries. The protection of the government from disruptive forces meant that economic growth could be promoted and thus, hopefully, the standard of living could rise.

The Labour government's continuation of the old military presence policy, albeit 'dressed-up' in justifications that may have been thought to have been more in keeping with the traditional party attitude, left it open to Opposition charges of changing its election policy. At the opening, in March, of the 1974 parliamentary session, the government was subjected to needling for reversing its declared policy with regard to the stationing of military forces overseas. McCready, the Opposition defence spokesman, tabled a motion noting "with interest" the Labour Party's "changed attitude" and its

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[57] *New Zealand Herald*, December 23, 1973, p5

endorsement of the National Party position. McCready charged that the Labour manifesto had indicated to many people that a Labour government would withdraw its forces, and that it was "common knowledge that this was Labour's thinking".[58]

The Labour Party struggled to refute the charge. R.P.B. Drayton claimed that there had been no change in policy - and indeed, if the manifesto were ignored as something of an aberration and Kirk's statements taken as the sole guide to intended policy, then he was correct. Drayton went on to say:

> "Because Singapore and Malaysia want New Zealand's full participation in the five-power defence agreement, it has been decided to maintain that full participation. Singapore and Malaysia attach considerable importance to this arrangement, and desire the continued presence of New Zealand forces in the area".[59]

Drayton reiterated that New Zealand would keep the forces in Singapore as long as it was the wish of the governments concerned that it do so.

The Opposition's J.R. Harrison said that the leaving of the forces in Singapore at the pleasure of the Malaysian and Singaporean governments was hardly the mark of an independent policy. He made the pertinent point that the consultation between New Zealand and Singapore referred to in the Labour manifesto was supposed to be consultation as to the reasonable date for the return home, "not consultation on whether or not they would come back; that was a forgone conclusion".[60]

Prime Minister Kirk struggled to answer this point. He said that a reasonable date had been set for the New Zealand troops to

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[58] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 389, p818, 13 March, 1974

[59] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 389, p819, 13 March, 1974

[60] *N.Z.P.D.* vol. 389, p824, 13 March, 1974

come home, but:

> "In the circumstances, that date was not a defined calendar date, but a date immediately both governments agreed that stability had been achieved".[61]

If Australian Prime Minister Whitlam had to some extent fallen victim to the power of the Labor Party's left-wing in regard to Malaysia-Singapore, Prime Minister Kirk seemed in no such danger. The party conference of May, 1974, however, proved that the Left, if not powerful, was still vocal. What the press described as "a strong group"[62] at the conference called vociferously for the withdrawal of New Zealand's forces by the end of 1975. One delegate from a youth branch described the governments of Malaysia and Singapore as reactionary, and accused them of suppression of freedom. A senior member of the party's executive, R. Waishing, said that New Zealand was helping to prop up a puppet government in Malaysia.[63] The Minister of Defence, however, was able to dissuade the delegates from passing a remit calling for a definite date for withdrawal. He said that the New Zealand government would pass on to the governments concerned "criticism of their attitudes which we find unacceptable".[64] The withdrawal remit was lost on a hands vote, and a remit affirming that New Zealand's military withdrawal should be timed in consultation with defence partners in the arrangement was passed in its place.[65]

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[61] Ibid., p827

[62] *Waikato Times*, May 17, 1974, p5

[63] Ibid.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Ibid.

Just at the time that the Labour government was being forced to defend its commitment to Singapore to its supporters, it was foisting off a further external threat to the ANZUK commitment. This time it came from the British government, which had changed again as a result of snap elections at the end of February, 1974. The return of the British Labour Party under Harold Wilson to power set the stage for an action replay of the negotiations between New Zealand and Britain over British withdrawal plans in 1968, except, of course, that it was now a Labour government in New Zealand asking for a continuing British presence. The British Labour Party was still committed to total withdrawal from Malaysia-Singapore. By 1974, there was only a battalion of infantry left to withdraw, but nevertheless the New Zealand government urged the Wilson government not to follow the Australians out of the Five-Power Defence Arrangement,[66] much as the Holyoake government had tried to keep a much more substantial British presence in the region six years previously.

The occasion for New Zealand's representations came only four days after Faulkner's speech to the Labour Party conference, when the new British Minister of State for Defence, William Rodgers, arrived in Wellington to seek the government's views on the British Defence Review, which involved more cuts, including the Singaporean one. After the talks, Faulkner said that he had made it clear that New Zealand did not regard its presence in Singapore as an open-ended commitment, but that the government felt that in view of the current situation [not specified] New Zealand forces needed to stay in South-east Asia a little longer.

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[66] *Waikato Times*, May 21, 1974, p3

> "Our view is that the South-east Asian area as a whole recognises that changes are inevitable, and are in fact, in some cases, desirable. However, we are anxious that these should be at an absorbable rate so the countries can gear themselves to look after their own affairs".[67]

According to the Minister, then, Singapore was not yet 'geared' to undertake its own defence. Rodgers told the Press in New Zealand that the governments in Malaysia and Singapore had indicated that they preferred the status quo for the time being. He also said that the British decision would be made by October.

At the end of August, Norman Kirk died, and his place as Prime Minister and Foreign Minister was taken by W.E. Rowling, who had been Minister of Finance. The Defence Ministry was taken over by W. Fraser, when Faulkner moved to the Ministry of Labour. In October, the Labour government in Britain consolidated its power in a further general election, and in December announced that it would withdraw the remaining British troops from South-east Asia. The New Zealand government had a second opportunity to follow its allies, but its reaction was the same as it had been to the Australian withdrawal in 1973.

Rowling responded to the British decision by saying that while New Zealand's forces would not stay in Singapore indefinitely, they would remain "as long as it was in the mutual interests of both this country and Singapore and Malaysia".[68] The introduction of a mention of New Zealand's interest alongside that of Singapore and Malaysia seemed to signal a slightly more cautious attitude on New Zealand's

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[67] Ibid.

[68] *O.D.T.* December 5, 1974, p7 (Wellington - N.Z.P.A.)

part as regards commitment. Rowling said: "Mr Wilson informed me several days ago that the review had ended, and that a statement containing proposals along these lines would be made". The New Zealand government, he said, regretted the decision, but understood the considerations that lay behind it. The Prime Minister went on to remark that the government was pleased that Britain had reaffirmed its intention of upholding the consultative provisions of the Five-Power Defence Arrangements. This, he said, was a welcome indication of continuing British interest in the security of the region.

It was not until Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew paid an informal visit to New Zealand in April, 1975, and remarked that Singapore no longer minded whether New Zealand forces remained or not that the Rowling government began to think about withdrawal.

At a conference of the New Zealand Institute of International Affairs in May, Rowling was asked if there had been any governmental reassessment of New Zealand's commitment to Singapore.

The Prime Minister referred directly to Lee Kuan Yew's statement and said:

> "This gives New Zealand reason to consider whether the troops should be kept in that area for any great length of time. At this stage no timetable has been established for their possible return to New Zealand... [but] as a result of the comments of Prime Minister Lee and subsequent discussions, the matter will be looked at reasonably soon".

The Prime Minister said then that one delaying factor was the inability of the government to accommodate the returning battalion.[69]

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[69] Rowling, W.E. *New Zealand in an Interdependent World*, p14-15

The announcement of the return, when it came, still shied away from a definite target date. "The government has decided in principle that the New Zealand force in Singapore should return home to New Zealand in the next two years or so". The Prime Minister said that the decision had been taken after consultation with New Zealand's partners in the Five-Power Defence Arrangements and - importantly - with their concurrence. The decision - like Australia's and Britain's previously - did not affect New Zealand's membership of the Five-Power Arrangements. Rowling said that the force had been helpful in promoting understanding and goodwill between Malaysia and Singapore and New Zealand. It had assisted them in adjusting to changing circumstances during the critical early years of their independence. More recently, the role of the New Zealand forces had been to help Malaysia and Singapore build up their own defence capacities. The return home of the force would not reflect any lessening of New Zealand's interest in the future well-being of the region and its stability.[70]

Conclusion

Despite the Labour Party's divergence from the National Party's approach to South-east Asia in regard to the sending of troops to Vietnam, the Labour Party remained committed to the stationing of military forces in Malaysia and Singapore. During the period up to the government's decision to retain the force in Malaysia after the British departure, the Leader of the Opposition expressed support for a continuing and reinforced military presence. This support

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[70] *Evening Post*, August 26, 1975

was reaffirmed by Kirk even after senior members of the Parliamentary party began to express doubts that New Zealand troops should be seen to be supporting particular governmental systems overseas. The Labour leader believed, as did the National Party leaders, that New Zealand had an interest in ensuring the stability of Asia, and - again in common with the Nationalists - that military forces to promote a climate of confidence were an acceptable means of ensuring this stability. Kirk, however, was not so much concerned with averting a security threat to New Zealand by the promotion of stability as in ensuring a suitable atmosphere for economic growth for the sake of the South-east Asian countries themselves.

Where Labour policies differed from those of National was in willingness to move into bi-lateral defence relationships with South-east Asian countries. Kirk, as early as 1967, had suggested that New Zealand should work towards a treaty of mutual assistance with South-east Asian countries; something that National governments were not eager to do without Great Power participation. When Labour came to power in late 1972, Kirk revealed that the policy of stationing military forces in Singapore was no longer dependent on Australian support, as it had so conspicuously been in 1968. Kirk lobbied Whitlam to keep the support unit in Singapore so that the New Zealand battalion could be serviced, but in July, when it was announced that the support unit would be withdrawn, the New Zealand government was prepared to go on without the Australians. The Labour government's Singapore policy to that extent marks an independence in New Zealand's approach to South-east Asia, but not a divorce from the premises of the approach of the previous twenty years.

CONCLUSION

New Zealand's China recognition and South-east Asian security policies were, to a considerable degree, determined by the attitudes and policies of the country's closest friends. Although these policies always owed something to factors other than the wishes of New Zealand's major allies, and occasionally everything, the general pattern was for the desires of an ally to be given most weight. The reason for the pattern was rooted in New Zealand governments' perceptions of national interests, and of the objectives necessary to promote those interests. Historically, New Zealand's main external interests had been seen as ensuring the country's physical security and promoting its economic security, although the first Labour government (1935-1949) had added an interest in promoting certain cultural values: the rule of international law, democracy, social justice, and self-determination for dependent peoples. During the 1950s and 1960s, these security, economic and cultural interests were still the paramount ones for New Zealand governments. The major general foreign policy objectives formulated to promote these interests were: to support Britain in the maintenance of its global political and military role, and, more generally, to support the Commonwealth; to maintain in particular a close relationship with Australia; to forge a close relationship with the United States; to promote good relations between Britain and the United States; and to promote the adherence of nations to the principles of the United Nations Charter. Since New Zealand saw these objectives as crucial, then all policies had to promote them rather than detract from them. No policy that seriously interfered with the objective of an ally could normally be entertained, and at the

same time New Zealand often felt bound to support allied policies that were not necessarily the ones it preferred.

As the 1961 and 1966 Defence Reviews stated, New Zealand believed that it had to work at retaining the confidence and support of its friends by helping them defend their vital interests. In particular, there was a concern throughout the period that American friendship could be alienated, and protection and markets thereby jeopardised. It was recognised that the United States had no tradition of outside commitments, and it was believed that the Americans had no particular interest in protecting New Zealand.

As well as the above general foreign policy objectives, New Zealand developed specific objectives with regard to Asia. With the rise of the People's Republic of China, New Zealand governments came to believe that New Zealand had a security interest in South-east Asia. South-east Asia was the region through which Chinese power could most easily be brought to within reach of Australia and New Zealand. A secondary set of objectives to deal with this interest can be discerned behind New Zealand's Asian policies in the period 1949-75. These objectives were: to encourage the retention of a sizable British military presence in the region; to get the United States militarily committed to the defence of the region, and to keep it so committed; to promote stability in the countries of South-east Asia by supporting and strengthening non-Communist governments in the region, and encouraging them in democratic tendencies and the pursuit of social justice; and to contain China's influence in the world. In the 1950s, the Labour Party adopted the further objective of fostering a closer relationship between China and the Western democracies, but this was not taken up by the National Party

until the later 1960s.

When both Britain and the United States indicated in the late 'sixties that they would move towards military withdrawal from South-east Asia, both New Zealand political parties became more interested in the promotion of closer cooperation among the countries of the region to ensure stability. The Labour Party, particularly, was prepared to see New Zealand closely involved in this effort. When it was seen that new forms of regional cooperation were not likely to be achieved very quickly, the Third Labour government developed the substitute objective of strengthening the bi-lateral ties between New Zealand and individual countries in South-east Asia.

New Zealand's Asian policies had to serve both the general and specific objectives and preferably as many of them as possible. Inevitably there were some conflicts when a proposed policy served some objectives but not others. It is evident that some objectives were more important than others, and that the order of importance changed during the period. Support for Britain did not claim the same policy loyalty as the cementing of the relationship with the United States, and in practice, Australian more than British influence counted in the Commonwealth connection. This was probably because the historic and cultural link with Britain was judged strong enough to preserve the relationship, and because New Zealand believed that, in military security terms, it needed the American relationship more. Although New Zealand desired to keep British forces in Asia, and this objective was the stimulus to certain policies, New Zealand governments were aware that overall British military strength was contracting, and that Britain's interest in the Asia-Pacific region was lessening. It was believed that Britain, no less than New Zealand, was ultimately

dependent on American power in the Far East, and that Britain's policy lines could not afford to move far from the American position. The combination of the decline in British power with a perceived tenuous American interest in New Zealand led New Zealand to be very sensitive about opposing American policy. Even on those occasions when New Zealand followed a British lead, it was only in directions to which the United States would not greatly object.

Even after entering a formal alliance with the United States in 1951, New Zealand did not feel that the relationship with the United States was secure. It was eager to secure an American commitment to the defence of its strategic approaches, so that American power would be employed to deflect any threat, rather than just be used to rescue an embattled New Zealand. The Holland government thus welcomed the advent of SEATO which brought American military support to South-east Asia. There remained, however, a fear that American interest in the area was marginal and that it could be withdrawn if American efforts were not supported. In the 'sixties, New Zealand had its American market interest to protect against a protectionist-minded Congress, too. On several occasions, the objectives of keeping the United States committed to New Zealand and to South-east Asia came into conflict with other objectives. On two of these occasions (viz. the debate over China recognition between 1957 and 1960, and the Vietnam intervention in 1965) New Zealand deferred to American policies, and on two occasions (Indo-China intervention in 1954 and Laos in 1959), New Zealand opposed American policies. On the occasions when American policy was opposed, New Zealand was upholding United Nations principles. It is notable, too, that on these occasions New Zealand had support from other allies.

New Zealand kept very close policy identity with Australia throughout the period, while differing from both the United States and Britain at times. Not until 1973 did New Zealand's Asian policy differ from Australia's in any substantial way. Australia's views appear to have been the primary determinant of New Zealand's Confrontation policy in 1964, and to have been influential in the Vietnam decision, the decision to leave troops in Malaysia after 1971, the decision to recognise China in 1972, and the decision not to recognise China in 1950. Australia's influence was probably more important than Britain's throughout the period.

New Zealand's United Nations ideals generally played a supporting role to other objectives, but when they conflicted with those other objectives, as in Laos in 1959, they took priority. New Zealand was not prepared to intervene in Indo-China in 1954 without a United Nations resolution. New Zealand's objective of promoting a stable non-Communist Asia was tempered by its ideals, such as a loose commitment to democracy, by a reluctance to become too committed to Asian countries on its own, and by its relationships. The relationships with the United States, Australia and Britain generally came first. New Zealand was always more amenable to supporting the semi-democratic, British-oriented Malaysian government than the dubious regimes of Indo-China. At the same time, it did not care to be committed to the Malaysian government.

The first decisions considered in this study - the decisions not to recognise China in late 1949 and early 1950 - involved two clashes of objectives, and point up three constant factors in the Asian policy pattern: first, that from the beginning, British influence was not necessarily the strongest factor in New Zealand

policy; despite the knowledge that British interests were involved (Britain had valuable investments in China) and the official rhetoric about the need to strengthen Commonwealth unity, other objectives were paramount. Second, that New Zealand had its own specific objectives in Asia and that occasionally they could be as important a policy determinant as its relationship objectives; the foremost factor in the nonrecognition decision seems to have been the concern to limit Chinese and Communist influence and concern for the governments of South-east Asia. Third, that concern for the American relationship was an important factor from the beginning of the period, and that it was more important as a stimulus or constraint than the relationship with Britain. It was known that the United States did not intend to recognise and did not wish its allies to. New Zealand's security interest in Japan - as well as in South-east Asia - made both the Fraser and the Holland governments take more account of American than British views.

The outbreak of the Korean War confirmed and strengthened the pattern of priority. New Zealand's security interest in Asia was heightened by the Communist attack, and the importance of the American relationship objective increased correspondingly. After the signing of the ANZUS Treaty, the American relationship carried still more weight. China recognition policy in the later 'fifties shows the dominating influence the relationship had become. Although elements of the New Zealand government - most notably Minister of External Affairs Webb - had serious reservations about American China policy, and voiced them both privately and publicly, the government had no intention of adopting a policy that conflicted with that of the United States. Holland was quite explicit in

Parliament in 1955 about not taking a policy line on China's admission to the United Nations that would upset the United States. At the 1956 and 1957 Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conferences, New Zealand replayed its role at the 1951 conference of keeping the Commonwealth from coming out in opposition to American policy.

Although the primary motive for the policy adopted was the objectives of strengthening the American relationship and encouraging American commitment to Asia, it seems evident that the non-recognition policy was also seen as serving other New Zealand objectives - principally the preserving of a non-Communist South-east Asia, the promoting of United Nations principles, and the enhancement of the United Nations as an effective institution. The non-admission of China to the United Nations was justified by saying that China did not uphold the principles of the United Nations.

The priority given to the American relationship objective is best shown up in the 'fifties by the China policy of the Second Labour government between 1957 and 1960. This government, unlike its National Party predecessor, was avowedly eager to grant diplomatic recognition to the People's Republic of China, but, like the National Party, was unwilling to strain the alliance with the United States by initiating a policy that would have been construed as unfriendly. The government's tactics had to concentrate on altering American policy. There were other external objectives involved in New Zealand's holding off from a recognition policy, however. The Labour government, too, was concerned about the effect of recognition on the non-Communist governments of South-east Asia, and after the Formosa Straits crisis and the suppression of the Tibetan rebellion, there was a concern by the government not to seem to condone, by recognition, a breach of

United Nations principles.

New Zealand's policies concerning South-east Asia were, as in the China case, not completely a function of Great Power policies, though owing a lot to them. Doidge in the early 'fifties stressed a perceived danger to Australasia through South-east Asia before either the United States or Great Britain was greatly interested, and suggested a Pacific Pact covering South-east Asia to stop the spread of Communism. This idea was not taken up by the United States until 1954. When the United States proposed that a Collective Defence System be formed for South-east Asia that year, the New Zealand government welcomed the initiative, and said that it should be formed as a matter of urgency. There was no question of New Zealand's being levered into a scheme by its allies to protect their interests. Indeed, New Zealand's policy regarding the Collective Defence System was distinct from those of both its major allies, although it parallelled that of Australia. New Zealand was more interested in the immediate formation of a system than Britain, but unwilling that it should be used for immediate intervention in Indo-China as the Americans wished.

New Zealand's policy, however, was to some extent constrained by the policy of an ally. New Zealand and Australia felt that they could not enter a South-east Asian alliance that did not contain Britain, although they wanted the alliance very much. New Zealand's commitment to support Britain militarily in a global conflict made it unable to take on a commitment that Britain did not share. Britain's attitude, and Australia's, may also have been important in New Zealand's reluctance to enter the Indo-China War, although New Zealand's loyalty to the United Nations system is the one clear reason for its policy

regarding intervention. Jackson claims that New Zealand followed a British-oriented policy in Indo-China in 1954: it could well have been an Australian-oriented policy.

There is no doubt that New Zealand's first major involvement in South-east Asia - the stationing of troops in Malaya in 1955 - came at the behest of an ally, and that that ally was Britain. The primary reason for New Zealand's policy appears to have been its belief in an obligation to support Britain in its global military role. However, two qualifying factors must be noted. First, the move was believed to be in New Zealand's strategic interest. The transfer of wartime obligations to Malaya - if not the stationing of ground troops - had been desired by New Zealand for some time. New Zealand had suggested the transfer at the Commonwealth Conferences of 1951 and 1953, but had not pressed the point. By agreeing to station troops in Malaya as part of a Commonwealth Strategic Reserve, New Zealand was serving its objective of keeping British troops in the region. The Reserve was a guarantee of a continuing British commitment at a time when troop withdrawals were being contemplated as the Malayan Emergency died down. Second, the move was also aimed at reinforcing American support for New Zealand and South-east Asia. The government believed that the contribution would offer proof to the United States that New Zealand was serious about resisting the communist threat in South-east Asia (a seriousness perhaps in doubt after the reluctance to intervene in Indo-China) and therefore worthy of help in an emergency. The contribution would be seen as an earnest of SEATO pledges and make it more likely that the United States would live up to its commitment. The commitment was not made against American wishes: the Australian government had checked that it fitted

in with American ideas.

The Labour government that came to power in 1957 kept the troops in Malaya during its term of office. This was again because the support for Britain objective was given high ranking. In 1955, Labour had agreed to the stationing of troops in Malaya primarily because it believed that New Zealand had to assist the United Kingdom to meet its obligations in the Far East. Behind the loyalty to Britain and the Commonwealth, however, was the objective of promoting the security of a non-Communist Asian country.

The late 'fifties saw a second occasion on which the American relationship came into conflict with another New Zealand objective and was not accorded priority. This was during the Laos crisis of 1959, when policy favoured by the United States was believed to be contravening a United Nations principle. Nash's opposition to the American proposal for military intervention in Laos was based on his belief that Laotian self-determination would be interfered with. On this occasion New Zealand was not prepared to help prop up a government of dubious legitimacy, even in service of the objective of a non-Communist Asia.

In the 1960s, British influence in New Zealand's Asian policy decisions became less, while Australian and American influence was maintained or increased. The first indication of this is provided by the Confrontation crisis, when New Zealand joined Australia in resisting until 1965 British pressure for them to permit their Strategic Reserve contributions to be used in Borneo. In 1955, New Zealand had seen it as its Commonwealth duty to support Britain in Malaya: eight years later, aiding Britain - or even Malaysia - was not as important as fitting in with Australia, being sure of American

backing, and retaining Indonesian friendship. In negotiating with Indonesia, New Zealand was developing its own policy in an area where traditionally it had acted as an adjunct of British power. This policy, however, seemed to be an extension of Australian and American policy. It may be a mistake to see Confrontation as signalling a sharp break with the pattern of influence in the 'fifties: in 1955, after all, Britain and Australia were agreed on policy, so that New Zealand was "free" to be dutiful to Britain without crossing Australia; in 1954, when Britain and Australia disagreed over SEATO policy, New Zealand's position was with Australia rather than Britain. Australian influence may always have been greater in New Zealand's Asian foreign policy than Britain's.

New Zealand's falling in line with Australia over the Borneo issue, however, did not mean that the sense of Commonwealth obligation was dead. Rhetorically it was as strong as ever, even if the public focus had transferred from Britain to Malaysia, and on the practical level, New Zealand met all other requests for military aid readily. In 1965, after forces had finally been committed to Borneo, the Prime Minister was still prepared to say publicly that New Zealand's Commonwealth obligations took priority over other commitments to South-east Asia, such as that to the American-backed cause in South Vietnam. This situation was to be reversed in 1968, however, after Britain announced the withdrawal of its military presence from South-east Asia. That fact, among others, shows that New Zealand's sense of Commonwealth obligation during Confrontation was founded on its continuing objective of keeping British military power in the region. The New Zealand government supported the creation of the Malaysian Federation primarily because it offered a means of keeping British

military power securely in the region, and it was believed that British power in the region was essential to continued stability. The hesitation about the troops suggests that the objective of maintaining close relations with Australia was in conflict with that of ensuring that British troops were able to stay in Asia - and that the former won out, perhaps because New Zealand was aware that Britain intended to reduce forces drastically in the future in any event. There was also the belief that a policy of military action against Indonesia would not further the objective of a non-Communist Asia.

The increased influence of the United States relationship objective on New Zealand's Asian policy is shown up by New Zealand's military commitment to South Vietnam. Although the government had grave doubts about the wisdom of sending troops to Vietnam, as it had in 1954, it swallowed them this time in order to service the American alliance and to keep the United States committed to the defence of South-east Asia. In 1954 the reluctance of other allies had convinced the Americans not to go ahead; in 1965 the United States went ahead and then asked for support. Once the United States had committed itself, the government believed that it had to give that support, especially as Australia this time supported the American move. New Zealand did not think that a policy of military intervention would help achieve the objective of a non-Communist South Vietnam.

It was the American relationship that continued to control New Zealand's China policy under the Second National government, too, although, unlike the Vietnam case, New Zealand's other objectives were also believed promoted by that policy. When Britain began to vote for China's admission to the United Nations in 1961, New Zealand

did not follow suit. Despite some differences in rhetoric, New Zealand's China policy did not start to change until the United States and Australia changed theirs. There were no attempts to contact the Chinese government until the Nixon Administration was seen to be doing so in 1971, and New Zealand did not move towards implementing the two-China policy it had espoused for some years in the United Nations until the Americans switched to such a policy. It was not until a Labour government took office in late 1972 that New Zealand moved ahead of American policy and formally recognised Peking. The American relationship was no longer likely to be strained by such a move, however, and the move was made in tandem with Australia, at Australia's urging.

Through most of the 'sixties, New Zealand saw non-recognition of China as being part of the promotion of two other objectives - the preservation of non-Communist governments in South-east Asia and the upholding of United Nations principles.

In the later part of the decade, however, the New Zealand government began to say that China should be in the United Nations and that New Zealand's policy was not directed towards China's exclusion, even though China's objectives and policies were recognised to be unchanged. It was clear that the objective of upholding certain United Nations principles that China was accused of flouting had become less important than another objective. New Zealand now thought it would serve its ultimate security interest to have China associated with the community of nations. The objective of self-determination for Taiwan continued to stand, and was explicitly given more importance than relations with China. Even with the American relationship objective no longer imperilled by a China recognition policy, the Taiwan rights objective continued to stop the National government from

adopting such a policy. The Labour government, on the other hand, put relations with China ahead of the self-determination principle.

The Australian attitude was particularly important, and the American one probably so, in New Zealand's decision in 1969 to keep troops on in Malaysia-Singapore after the British withdrawal in 1971, but the initiative for the policy came this time from New Zealand - a reversal of the 1964 Confrontation situation. New Zealand showed an early inclination to maintain its presence, in service of the stability of South-east Asia. Although New Zealand troops had been in Asia primarily to serve the objective of keeping a British military presence in the region, they had also been there to bolster the Malaysian government's security, and if the first objective was now dead, the second still stood. Once it had been decided that a lone New Zealand military presence would still serve that objective and could be undertaken, there was a reason for maintaining it. Another - perhaps stronger - reason was the American relationship. The Americans had made it clear that they wanted New Zealand assistance in promoting regional security. A third reason was that a New Zealand presence would assist the return of British troops to Asia if the British government changed.

The New Zealand government, however, was not prepared to make a commitment to Malaysia without Australia, and waited for an Australian decision before announcing its own.

New Zealand's policy in South-east Asia seemed finally to emerge from the Australian shadow for the first time in 1973, when the decision was made to retain New Zealand forces in Singapore after the Australians had announced that they would withdraw. For the Labour government, the new objective of a closer relationship with Asian

countries took priority. Labour, too, was prepared to uphold the old objective of supporting Commonwealth allies, whether or not British troops were in the region.

It can be said, then, that although the policies of allies were the most influential factors in the majority of policy decisions involving Asia, only in a few cases did those allied policies not serve other New Zealand objectives. On two occasions where there was conflict between relationship objectives and other objectives - the consideration of the recognition of China by the Nash government, and the Vietnam intervention - New Zealand adopted a policy line not in accordance with its wishes, because of the known attitudes of its allies. Only the Laos case in 1959 can be cited as a clear-cut example of New Zealand's not falling into line, and in this instance, unlike the Vietnam situation in 1965, the New Zealand government was reacting in private to a mere proposal, and not to an accomplished fact. (It is not clear whether New Zealand's opposition to intervention in Indo-China in 1954 was due more to Australian and British attitudes than to the government's convictions; in 1950, New Zealand's defiance of Britain over China contained more than an element of deference to the United States).

As far as Asian policy is concerned, American and Australian influences seem to have been constantly powerful from the very beginning of the period. British influence seems to have been less constantly powerful. It cannot be said that British-oriented policies prevailed through most of the 'fifties: as early as 1950, the American line towards China had been adopted by New Zealand; the policy-line in Indo-China in 1954 was between the British and American positions, and closest to Australia's; in Malaya, there was no question of which influence prevailed, since the Americans did not

oppose the move, and the Australians were enthusiastic for it. British influence appears to have become less between 1955 and 1964, but this may be deceiving.

Although New Zealand's China and South-east Asian security policies were determined mainly by priorities among the external objectives of governments, it is evident that internal objectives had some influence on policy. The only one to surface with some consistency in this study was the desire of particular governments to maintain, or strengthen, their electoral position. (Other objectives, of course, affected policy indirectly by restricting the amount of money available for the Foreign Affairs and Defence Departments). In 1949-50 both parties feared the electoral consequences of an early recognition of the People's Republic of China. In 1954, the Labour Party included a China recognition clause in its election platform partly because it thought that it would be advantageous electorally. The party deleted the clause from the 1957 manifesto because China had become unpopular and Labour knew it was facing a tight election. The influence of the domestic political situation in the following years was probably a reinforcing factor in the Labour government's refusal to recognise China in its term. It seems probable that decisions on China policy by both parties in 1971 were influenced by party political considerations.

It is likely that the National government's decisions to attempt to send trade and goodwill missions to China in 1971 were stimulated to some extent by Labour Party pressure: the announcement of the attempt to send a trade mission came eleven days after the Labour Party had publicly called for such an attempt, and the attempt at a goodwill mission followed closely upon the news that the Chinese intended to invite a Labour Party mission to China. Similarly,

Kirk's reluctance to accept the Chinese invitation on behalf of the Labour Party and his preference that the mission be mixed politically shows that the Labour Party saw political risks at that stage in being too closely identified with a forward China policy. Domestic political considerations played a part in South-east Asian policy, too. Nash believed that Labour opposition to the proposal to send troops to Malaya in 1955 would be exploited electorally by the National government. With Labour building towards a victory in 1957, the party may well have counted this factor quite highly in its assessment of its policy. There is an indication that some of the Second National Government's hesitation in sending troops to Vietnam was due to concern about the effect on the 1966 election. The government was apparently reluctant to send the infantry battalion in Malaysia to Vietnam before it had a mandate for Vietnam policy at the election. Immediately after the election, it began to consider sending further aid. Clearly, however, domestic political considerations were never the primary stimuli to or constraints on policy. Fraser and Doidge, for instance, each had more fundamental reasons for non-recognition. Fraser showed that this was so by continuing to advocate non-recognition after the 1949 election was over and he was out of office. During the term of the Second Labour Government, it seems from Nash's talk with McIntosh that the government was considering recognising China despite the majority of one, and that it was the external constraint that was important.

It is clear that, to a greater or lesser degree, the pattern of foreign policy determination - (viz. determination mainly by external objectives, and mainly by allied relationships among those objectives) held true for both parties while in government. The parties shared

most of their important objectives, and, with occasional differences, the priority among them. Policies, as a result, were largely bi-partisan. Differences in priority, and differences in perception of Asian events, led to the differences in policy. The Labour Party did formulate some different objectives from the National Party as a result of its different perception of Asian events.

Labour was much more prepared than the National Party to recognise the indigenous origin and popular support of Communist movements in Asia. This led it in the 'fifties to formulate the objective of bringing China into the community of nations, an objective not adopted by the National Party until the late 1960s. During the term of the 1957-60 government, Labour's China objective clashed with the American relationship objective it shared with the National Party. The Labour Party, like the National Party, put the American relationship first, and policy remained the same as the National government's. In the 1970s, however, there was a difference between the parties over the priority of China-related objectives and this led to a change in policy. After 1971, the objective of establishing a relationship with China became more important to the Labour Party than the restraining objective of maintaining Taiwan's right to self-determination. The National Party kept the reverse priority for these objectives. The timing of the Labour Party's recognition of China in 1972, after Kirk's statements of a deliberate approach, show that the Australian relationship was as important to the Labour Party as the National Party in determining policy.

There was little difference between the parties concerning policy towards Malaysia and Singapore, since both parties, for most of the period, accepted that the needs of the British and Commonwealth

relationship should be the primary determinant of policy. The Labour Party was prepared to acquiesce in the sending of troops to Malaya, provided progress towards self-government continued, and later the Labour government was prepared to keep troops on internal security duties in Malaya as a Commonwealth duty. The Labour Party believed that military aid to Malaya and Singapore did not contravene its principles of letting developing peoples work out their own destiny, since the governments were thought democratic. In the late 'sixties and early 'seventies, the Labour Party was more interested in close bi-lateral ties with Malaysia and Singapore than the National government. Whereas the National government was reluctant to assist Malaysia in 1969 without Australia, the Labour government in 1973 had no such concern.

Although Labour followed National and let relationship objectives play the major part in two areas of Asian policy, in one area - Indo-China - it differed with National in not letting relationships be the determinant. In relation to Indo-China, the Labour Party found that relationsip objectives and the objective of preserving non-Communist governments in South-east Asia which it shared with the National Party, clashed with the party's commitment to National self-determination and social justice. The National Party accepted the view that Communist movements in Indo-China were externally sustained, and thus did not see any clash of objectives. In the 1959 Laos crisis, the Labour government put another objective (namely, the promotion of the principle of national self-determination) ahead of the American relationship, in contrast to the National government's 1965 actions concerning Vietnam, where the American relationship had priority.

As mentioned above, the two situations are not entirely comparable, since Laos policy was formulated in reaction to a proposal, whereas Vietnam policy was a reaction to an accomplished fact. The National government, on evidence, may have opposed the American proposal to intervene militarily in Vietnam when it was first mooted, only to go along once the proposal was adopted. The Labour government was never in this situation. It must be noted, however, that Labour did oppose National's 1965 Vietnam policy. In 1972, the attitudinal differences between the parties was expressed in policy when the Labour government withdrew New Zealand's army training teams from Vietnam. The Third Labour Government clearly assigned a lower priority to the objective of a non-Communist South-east Asia than did its National predecessor.

In sum, then, in the period 1949 to at least 1972, it may be said that there was no significant difference in the pattern of foreign policy determination with a change of government. The foreign policies of New Zealand governments of both political colours were heavily influenced by the attitudes and policies of New Zealand's major allies.

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